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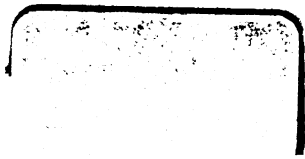
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# JESSIE'S FLIRTATIONS.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF

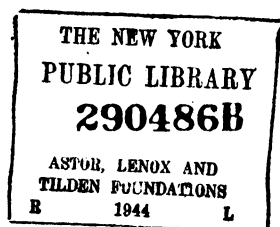
"KATE IN SEARCH OF A HUSBAND,"

&c., &c.



NEW YORK:  
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## TO THOSE INTERESTED.

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WE have been credibly informed that a gentleman, an officer in the United States Army, has stated seriously and in a public manner that he was the author of a former production from our pen—"KATE IN SEARCH OF A HUSBAND."

Nothing but insanity could have excused the gentleman's assertion, as it was wholly *untrue*.

Also, we were introduced to a lady who claimed for her brother the authorship of the same fiction. This gentleman also belongs to the army.

For the benefit of the lady, who exhibited much sisterly warmth in defending her brother's supposed rights, we will state, in the most positive and unqualified terms, that her gallant brother, the surgeon, never heard, thought, or imagined of the existence of "Kate in Search of a Husband" until he saw it in print.

We should not have noticed this but to correct error or punish falsehood; and which was our strongest incentive we leave for those most interested to determine.

March, 1846.

SEP 8 1944



# JESSIE'S FLIRTATIONS.

## CHAPTER I.

"EVERYTHING in life is a lesson—each act a warning, or example. Confessions of robbers and murderers teach lesser rogues, where 'master spirits' have failed, how to improve upon the examples of their 'illustrious predecessors.' The history of the most humble individual hath its lesson, as well as the lives of the most exalted. And he who would teach true life, must watch the phases of the lives of those who surround him."

"That is what one may call *moon-philosophy*, is it not?" interrupted a young lady, stepping forward and leaning upon the chair of the first speaker.

"It's true philosophy," returned the gentleman; "but where have you discovered its *moonshine*, miss?"

"I was reading, yesterday, in the almanac about phases," replied the lady, demurely, "and upon consulting Doctor Johnson, I found the word defined as relating to the appearance of the moon—"

"Almanac and dictionary!" exclaimed the gentleman, in interruption.

"Certainly, my dear sir," rejoined the lady. "You are always quoting my dear grandmother as a most sensible woman, and as a pattern for all of her sex. I have most positive information that the almanac and Bible were her only books of instruction and amusement; but I add a dictionary to my catalogue, because Doctor Johnson is indisputable authority with you."

"I cannot but congratulate you, my dear girl," returned the gentleman, laughing, "upon the choice of your studies, and trust that, in time, they will clip the wings of your imagination, and—"

"Make me as matter-of-fact and practical as my dear uncle," interrupted the lady. "But do not hope it," she continued, "for, to me, the dictionary is a prototype of fashionable life, where everything is proper according to usage, but where one might study from youth until threescore, and never gain a new thought, or—"

"And what does a woman want of thoughts?" interrupted the gentleman. "She is not called to the senate, or count-

ing-room. It is not her position to toil for fame, or the luxuries of life. Your grandmother was a pattern—"

"Of affection and housewifery, I will admit," said the lady, finishing the sentence which ever lingered on the lips of her uncle, both as a testimony of the worth of the departed, and as his appreciation of female excellence.

"But," she continued, "Dinah can make your jellies and sweetmeats, roast beef and make puddings with a perfection of culinary skill which I can never hope to attain. And as I shall never marry, I cannot see what great good is to arise from making me a young grandmother."

"Never marry! pshaw! no woman ever thought so—of *herself*!" remarked the gentleman, contemptuously.

"From the philosophical precepts of my kind instructor," rejoined the lady, "I endeavor to regard everything as plain sense may dictate. I have positive demonstration that I am not beautiful—it is constantly impressed upon my memory, that I do not possess wealth, nor the accomplishments of my grandmother—and destitute of all these three essentials of conjugal felicity, it needs neither a wise man nor a seer to foretell how much below par my chances are, in a world where an equivalent is sought, even in love and matrimony."

The entrance of a third person prevented any reply from the gentleman, even if he had wished to dispute the premises advanced by the lady. After the usual salutations, the new-comer turned to the lady.

"And pray, Miss Jessie," said he, "with what transcendental sublimity were you enlightening your philosophical uncle, this evening?"

"For once, sir," returned the lady haughtily, "I was talking plain, common sense."

"That would hardly be possible for you," interrupted the gentleman.

"Undoubtedly," retorted the lady, "you deem common sense as much a matter of Greek to me, as common courtesy is Chinese to you."

"Now don't get in a pet," returned the

gentleman, laughing. "It is absolutely necessary, occasionally, to throw cold water on your imagination, to keep you from flying off into that fairy land which you have peopled with beings as beautiful and generous as the heroes and heroines of your favorite romances. But let me tell you, that this world is but a plain bread-and-butter world, and that Thaddeus of Warsaw, William Wallaces and Helen Mars do not exist, except in the prolific imaginations of young misses and romance writers."

"And permit me to assure you, sir," interrupted the lady, "that as far as your sex is concerned, I do not look for anything very noble, ingenuous, or disinterested. But as for woman, I do not think it would detract from her excellence, were she sometimes as pure and generous as the heroines of those exquisite romances which you have referred to. Nay more: I would make no objection if they were all angels, and in the *home of angels*."

Both gentlemen laughed heartily at the lady's petulance.

"Why, Jessie," said the uncle, as soon as his mirth allowed him to speak, "I fear you study other books than the almanac and dictionary."

"I study the phases of the lives of those who surround me," replied Jessie, with mock humility.

The uncle laughed. "Oh," said he, "if you had been as apt a scholar as your grandmother—"

"I wish I had been my grandmother!" interrupted Jessie, in a tone of vexation. "But as I am so unfortunate as not to possess one tithe of her quietness, I do wish you might be convinced that the same pleasures do not suit my fancy."

"What would you be, were the choice given you?" asked the uncle.

"I'd be a butterfly, born in a bower,  
Where roses, and lilies, and violets meet—  
Forever a-roving from flower to flower,  
And kissing all buds that were pretty and sweet,"

the lady sang, and as she finished, bowed her head and imprinted a kiss upon the brow of her interrogator.

"Nature made you a flirt," rejoined the uncle, "and I fear that, the most quiet life will not eradicate the bias."

"If you have discovered that, starvation will not cure the evil," returned the lady; "perchance, a surfeit might prove a better remedy. At least, I will not make objections to a change of regimen."

"A surfeit of flirtations!" exclaimed the gentleman. "Have you that vanity to believe that you could create a sensation in the giddy whirl of fashion?"

"Certainly not," replied Jessie. "But, if I could not be privileged to make a dunce of myself; yet, I can imagine much enjoyment in watching those whom nature has

given diplomas to do so, with *éclat* and admiration."

"Amiable!" sarcastically ejaculated the visitor.

"But not in the least transcendental," rejoined Jessie. "I do think I am entitled to some special reward for my progress in your every-day-philosophy; you, sir, have cause to be proud of your pupil."

"Not, if in avoiding the clouds, she descends to the mud-puddle," rejoined the gentleman. "There is a medium between the two, and neither extreme is desirable."

"But I shall seek both for variety," resumed Jessie. "To see the same faces continually—to hear the same lessons daily—to be reproved for the same faults forever, creates *ennui*, and gives me the nightmare in the day time."

"Madcap!" said the uncle, laughing, "will nothing but a northern tour induce you to give me some peace?"

"No; nothing," replied Jessie. "And, if you refuse that, I will—I will lie awake nights to study mischief—I will stir the plantation up to an insurrection—and—and—I cannot think what else I will do—yes, to clap the climax, I will put things to rights in your study."

"Keep out of that!" exclaimed the gentleman, "and you may have an earthquake, if you will. But of all things, deliver me from having my papers 'put to rights' by a woman."

"I will pack up every paper as nice as grandmother's stocking-bag," rejoined Jessie, "unless—" and she held up her finger menacingly.

"Well; well," said the uncle, "you must go—but—"

"Thank you! thank you!" cried Jessie, smothering him with kisses.

"There! there!" he exclaimed, struggling to free himself from her caresses, "there, that will do—a perfect woman! scold and pout until they gain their end, and then eat you up—not because they love you, but because you have gratified some whim. But," continued he, "how many hogsheads of tobacco will it take for your outfit?"

"I guess, it will take a tarnation sight of money to fix me out for muster," replied Jessie, dropping her voice into a perfect Yankee drawl.

Both gentlemen laughed, for both were aware that nothing could produce a more generous supply than to arouse Mr. Burton's (the uncle) prejudice against Yankee prudence, or as he termed it "Yankee meanness."

"Well, well," said Mr. Burton, that being his usual reply when he had nothing else to say, "your mimicry has reminded me of one condition, which must be annexed to my consent." Jessie turned to her uncle with an inquiring look.

"I am not going to have you," added Mr. Burton, "go flirting through the country as my niece." An expression of surprise and pain passed over Jessie's face, and her eye dilated. Her uncle hastily continued, "Why, Jessie, don't look so sober. I do not make the restriction because I am ashamed of you—but to prevent the Yankees from making love to you on speculation."

"If your niece, I am not your heiress," rejoined Jessie, with a reassurance tone of voice.

"But everybody does not know that," replied Mr. Burton. "Still, I am glad that you remember the condition."

"I am not likely to forget Tom, nor my grandmother," returned Jessie, with her wonted sauciness.

"Both you and Tom are incorrigible dunces," rejoined Mr. Burton. "For four years, the boy has not set his foot in the state," he continued, "because I ventured to hint to him that I hoped he would find my niece agreeable. And you have gone on flirting with a fool, for no earthly reason, as I can see, but because I once said that unless you married Tom, you should not inherit my property."

"I have learned to tolerate the fool, as you call him, from a want of other companionship," returned Jessie, with a spice of tartness.

For on no subject is a woman so sensitive as about her lover. And Jessie, with all her whimsicalities, was but a woman.

But, my reader, if you have yawned over this prolix introduction, permit me to say that I choose that Jessie should introduce herself in one of her least attractive moods. The northern tour had been the subject of petition each successive spring, since she became an inmate of her uncle's mansion. Every art of persuasion and coaxing had been essayed and failed; and now she resolved to *quarrel* him into consent. And, by the way, it was not a very unwise resolution.

Old bachelors, as a class, are fond of opposition. It touches the impregnability of the intrenchments with which they have surrounded their hearts to yield to soft and gentle persuasions. And Lady Montague made a strange mistake when she asserted that there were but two kinds of people—men and women. In my catalogue, I have found three—men, women, and old bachelors. Married and young men can be flattered by sweet words and gentle acts. But old bachelors are sooner caught by a slight touch of the acid: arriving at their conclusion, undoubtedly, by ratiocination, that lemon juice added to sugared water, only makes it the more palatable. And oftentimes where tenderness, beauty, gentleness, and amiability have failed, the well-directed artillery of a sen-

sible shrew has forced capitulation, without terms or conditions.

Of course, these remarks will not apply to every individual, as there are many old bachelors in fact, who are no more so at heart, than every church-member is a christian.

OLD BACHELORS! in truth, they are one of the luxuries of social life. And if our American calculator of the end of time, had brought forward their increase as one of the signs of the approaching millenium—Why the argument could have been supported by testimony as strong and not more forced than the whole basis of his theory.

"And old maids!"

Hush! So few are old maids from *free will*, that they form no distinct class from their sex in general.

It must be nature, or choice, not necessity, which creates the distinctive characteristics. Because an irresistible fiat should compel men, like the king of old, to eat grass, would that constitute them oxen!

## CHAPTER II.

MR. BURTON, the uncle, to introduce the gentleman particularly, was, if an old bachelor, a warm-hearted man. He was, perhaps, a little singular, something eccentric, and, perchance, a little whimsical in his own way, if not in a womanly manner. And who have not their own peculiar whims, fancies, and plans! the traits and slight inequalities which mark the individuality of separate humanity! And for these, when they militate not against another's happiness, who should be blamed, or censured more than they should that the color of their hair, their stature, or their features were not the exact counterpart of their fellow-man! Ah! would you assert that God fashioned the form, but that the immutable decree of conventional usage has decided that the mind and manners must be moulded into a sameness by the crucibles of prejudice and education! The history of the past has conclusively shown that individual opinions, unsupported by precedents, are regarded but little short of insanity—that one must not presume to think new thoughts, or advance a new idea. Or, if they so presume, must not be pained. If society deem them, like counterfeit notes, spurious and worthless. If a body of men whether associated, or incorporated, start new theories, or projects, they, perchance, may be endorsed by society, provided they have previously received the signatures of the president secretary, cashier, comptroller, and I do not know how many other dignities of proprieties. But single ind. :

pendent individualities, whether of thought, or manner, are crimes, not to be forgiven, against the august fiat of good and evil—public opinion.

But to return from our unintentional digression:—"The world" had decided Mr. Burton a little whimsical, because he had decided to have his own way; presumptively thinking it the better. And one of his fancies, or plans, was that, at some fitting period, his niece Jessie Graham and his adopted son, whom the servants called the "young massa," or "Massa Tom," and the neighbors "Master Thomas," or "Tom Burton," should become 'twain of one flesh,' and inherit his estate. In such an event, it would save him the trouble of deciding which had the strongest claim to be his heir—which was to him dearest and best. For an equal division of the property would be too small an expression of his affection for either. Not but that Mr. Burton's estate and possessions were ample, but if each could retain the whole—it would be but the measure of his justice towards the cherished objects of his care. And there was but one way to attain this, and that was, they two become one. And that this should be, had been his final conclusion upon the subject; not dreaming then, that opposition might arise from the parties interested, before the final consummation of his wishes and intentions. But when aware that opposition was excited, he prudently forbore to press the matter as a command, and only alluded to it in playful raillery, reiterating the assertion that they should not inherit his property unless as joint stock of perpetual partnership. And he learned also, that even young people are more grateful to have their own way, and bide their own pleasure, whether for bliss or woe, than to have the road to happiness marked out and surveyed by the most wise and skillful engineer. But, withal, the old gentleman did not despair of attaining his favorite project, and only changed his means from active to passive. Would he, a man of near "threescore years and ten," who never had yielded in thought or act to mortal man, be thwarted in the only plan which he had ever set his whole heart upon, by the foolish fantasies of two ungrateful children, who did not understand their own good?

First, because she has introduced herself, we will turn to Jessie Graham, the namesake of "the flower of Dunblane," and the representative of any flower which denoteth fickleness, but not falseness: or perchance the symbol of novelty; for she did not change, she did not forget the old and past, but each day found her different,—each day had added some new feeling or emotion. Her mind was a mental kaleidoscope, the same, but presented in some new combination. Still with all this ex-

uberance of fancy, she was proud, generous, and affectionate. Her independence could ill brook dictation, and she scorned cowardice and selfishness. She could have loved Tom, the penniless orphan, but she scorned the idea of giving her person as the price of her uncle's possessions. To her there were more charms in the romantic heroic, than in the wise and prudent. She, like many young misses, looked forward to love and be beloved as the panacea for all the evils and vexations in life, and not as a despised substitute for bread and butter, if necessity required the sacrifice. She and the "bugbear Tom," as she called him, had never met, as he was in a northern state pursuing his studies when she arrived from the southern home of her childhood, as the legacy of a dying and widowed mother. Her parents had both, within a few weeks of each other, fallen victims to an epidemic incidental to southern climates; and their petted, spoiled, and wayward child was consigned to the care and protection of an unknown relative (for she never had seen her uncle) Mrs. Graham's only brother. But the mother knew that her brother was kind and generous; and she committed her orphan, in trust, to His care, who has promised to be "the father of the fatherless." And her dying moments were spared the anxiety of knowing that she left her child destitute as well as fatherless; for it was those who settled the estate, who by their superior penetration, or legerdemain in figures, discovered it insolvent. But there were not those wanting, who accused the legal gentleman of wronging the weak, and denying justice to the creditors. But the creditors' claims were not large enough to induce them to incur the costs of a suit in chancery; and the child had not a suspicion that dishonesty or injustice could exist. By courtesy, or benevolence, she was permitted to retain her mother's personal property, and her kind nurse Chole, and her expenses were defrayed to her uncle's. And if Mr. Burton suspected wrong, the expenses of an inquiry and litigation in a foreign country, deterred him from seeking justice for his ward and niece.

She was fourteen when she arrived at her uncle's; and either that she had been the constant companion of her mother, or the southern sun of her childhood's home had matured her mind, as well as warmed the blood which flowed through her veins, she appeared three or four years older. Her grief and mourning for the lost and dead was poignant and deep; and this, for the time, obliterated the more prominent faults of her character, willfulness and pride. And yet, she was never proud except when angry. Excite her anger, and then the dormant pride would

be exhibited in the flashing eye and imperious manner. But during the first months of her bereavement, she was gentle and sorrowing; and as soon as the first bitterness of her grief was passed, she was despatched to a boarding-school, nearly two hundred miles distant, to finish her education, and did not return to her uncle's house for two years and a half.

"She is noble," thought her uncle, as she commended her faithful Chole to his care, after she had vainly petitioned that she should accompany her.

"Promise me, uncle," said Jessie, as she concluded her charges about the favorite servant, "that if she is sick, she shall have as good care as you would give me, and I will be content to leave her."

The promise was given, and she departed, satisfied that she had done all within her power for the well-being of her humble but faithful friend.

During her absence 'Master Tom' visited his childhood's home, at the close of his collegiate course at the north, and was made acquainted with the secret wish of his patron-father.

"Sir," said he, in reply to the communication, "I beg that you will not allow any thought of me to influence your wishes respecting your niece. She has claims upon you which I have not—those of blood, and the helplessness of her sex. By your kindness I am the possessor of a thorough education, and God has given me a share of health and energy; and I feel competent to meet and struggle with the world for a portion of its bounties. And—pardon me, my dear father—but I cannot promise you, nor give you the hope that I will wed a wife as the price of your fortune."

"Whew!" rejoined Mr. Burton; "any body, to see your haughty manner and proud decision, would think my little, quiet Jessie an ogress."

"She may be an angel, but my answer is the same," interrupted the young gentleman.

"Well, well," returned Mr. Burton, "we won't quarrel about it, for I don't know that Jessie would have you on the same, or any conditions. But if you feel competent to meet and struggle with the world, through what channel do you propose to carry your enterprise or exertions?"

"With your approbation, I had thought of the law. And I had purposed to speak to you of my wish, if the subject which has drawn it forth had not been named."

Mr. Burton made no comment upon the arrangement; but when Master Tom took his leave, to enter upon his legal studies, his purse resembled anything but the ill-furnished one of a poor student. And when he would have remonstrated with Mr. Burton when informed of the more

than liberal arrangements which he had made, both to facilitate his advancement, and contribute to his pleasure while pursuing his studies, he was interrupted by the old gentleman's usual "Well, well."

"But don't be a fool, Tom," he continued, "if you propose independence for yourself, you must live while you are a student, and my income is my own now—to do as I please—whenever I may make the heir of it, when I am dead." And Tom had been too well trained in his young days, to think of further disputing the will of his generous father-friend.

And would the old man disinherit one who had been to him as a son—the only tie to remind him of one loved and lost in early youth, and the son of a father whom he had loved as a brother! Were the ties, which the helplessness of childhood insensibly wind around the affections of the protector, to be severed by one later known, although connected by the bonds of consanguinity? One also who might prove less grateful, less obedient, and less loving! Jessie was the daughter of his only sister, the loved and wee plaything of his youth. But Tom was bound to him by ties not less dear, and hardly less sacred. To unite the two as one, he could satisfy his own heart and conscience—and he could not be satisfied with any arrangement upon other terms. The unqualified veto of Tom upon the question, had raised a cloud of perplexities in the future for the kindly-hearted old man; but he forebore to increase the difficulties by pursuing the subject at present. Jessie might prove more tractable, and it might yet be as he wished it. But how Jessie could marry Tom, if the latter would not consent to the measure, was a dilemma, which fortunately did not present itself to his mind, to increase his anxieties.

And who was Tom? The son of a gallant officer in the United States Navy, who lost his wife when he gained his son, and who lost his life in a successful battle with the enemies of his country; and the brother of Mr. Burton's early and never forgotten love. He was a man to whom success, or the realization of his most ardent desires, ever proved a deep misfortune. Ardently attached to his wife, nothing was wanting to make the bliss of his life complete, but a son to inherit his name. For years his prayer was denied; and when granted, the mother's life was required as the sacrifice. His sister had bloomed in beauty, which was increased by the loveliness of purity and of truth; and when about to be united to the only man whom he thought worthy of her, the friend of his heart, death claimed the sweet blossom, and transplanted it to a celestial paradise. An accomplished and brave officer, engaged in actual defence of his country's liberty, his first wish was to



meet and show the enemy the prowess of his command. The desire was granted in an unequal but successful contest, and his life was the forfeit of his daring bravery. The scarcely legible note, which he traced with his dying hand, to the friend of his youth, had been treasured with a woman's care and affection. And when Tom had departed, and the old man went and unclosed the drawer which contained the time-soiled, but sacred memento of his dead friend, did the tear which dropped from his eyelid while he perused the trembling characters, show that he had grown recreant to his trust? The note ran thus.

"DEAR FRANK:

"We have had a hard brush with the enemy, but we gained the day. My men were cool and brave as lions, but my heart ached that the lives of so many noble fellows must pay the price of victory. A battle gained, carries desolation and mourning in its train, but this is the inevitable fate of war. My life must also be a sacrifice to our success. But don't grieve—if it were not for my little motherless boy, whose only legacy is his father's sword, I should go to meet my sainted Amelia without regret. But to your care I consign my son. Be a father to him—make him noble, virtuous, and manly. Tell him that he had an angel for a mother, and a man, whose heart was dedicated to his country's welfare, for his father. Bid him, if he lives to manhood, not to shame the memory of either. Tell him to love truth, as he values his father's dying blessing—that none but cowards seek the subterfuge of falsehood. As you have been ever true to me—by your early love for Helen, be a father to him, and may God bless him, and make him a comfort to you—even as an own son—God bless you forever, my—"

Here the note was abruptly closed. The writer fainted from pain and exertion, but revived sufficiently to give the direction; and after his death it was forwarded with his effects to Mr. Burton, accompanied by a letter from the surgeon, who had received the directions, detailing a minute account of the closing scene.

Tom, who, at the death of his father, was but three years old, was soon removed to Mr. Burton's, where he grew up the pet, but not spoiled one, of both master and servants. At first, he used to inquire "When will papa come?" and when Mr. Burton would take him on his knee and tell him that he was "papa," the little fellow would shake his head incredulously, and say "No, no; papa pretty." And one day when he accidentally caught sight of his father's uniform, which was being aired, he ran with childish delight after Mr.

Burton to come and see—"Papa come. papa come!" was his repeated exclamation, until he had drawn his friend to the spot.

"Yes, my child," he replied, as he saw the garments which had awakened the little boy's memory, and his eye rested upon the dark stains of his friend's blood, "you shall ever find a father here." And he clasped him to his bosom as he carried him from the sight of those sad mementos. And in a few years the memory of the "pretty papa" had faded from the mind of the child, or was remembered but as some far and partially forgotten dream. But when the child had grown to manhood, then again arose the vivid impressions of childhood—of the only parent he had ever known. And then, the generous, noble heart of the young man turned with even strengthened affection to him who had been as a father to him, and to whom he was bound by the ties of gratitude, as well as love.

When Jessie returned from her school, she was urged more strongly upon the subject of marriage with the foster-son, than he had been. It was one of Mr. Burton's theories (and in that he was not singular, but adopted the prevailing opinion of mankind), that woman was but the passive subject of superior wills, and was bound to obedience in every relation of life. That what would be a sacrifice for man and self-denial sufficient to canonize him as a saint of generosity, was but woman's simple duty—to be performed without demur or opposition. Verily, it is no flattery to call woman an angel; for whether as mother, daughter, sister, or wife, if she simply and truthfully perform the duties incumbent upon her in these relations, the good of others is her first prompting and incentive to action. Self is forgotten—her pleasure is in ministering to the happiness of others—and duty is but the work of love. And what will not woman perform, when her energies are aroused by her affections? true woman's love may be sought and given, but it never can be purchased. And although Jessie was not a pattern-woman, yet in her heart there was too much of truth, to give her heart at command, and for the price of her uncle's possessions.

Marrying for love, without any consideration for those necessities of life, "soap and sugar," may be folly. But to marry for the establishment, although legalized by law, deserves a much harsher name. True affection consecrates even weakness, but even law cannot wipe out the odium of bartering the person for money. Prudent mothers and calculating fathers inculcate into the minds of their children, an amiable horror of what the world calls "imprudent matches;" and the wisdom of matri-

mony is achieved by what the same august potentate terms a "prudent match." The indiscretion of the first excites pity and regret; while the marketable caution of the latter provokes scorn. There is an apology for folly, but heartless intrigue deserves to be condemned. We are aware that our remarks may shock the nerves of popular prejudice; but when we see the most sacred attributes of our natures invaded, and offered for a *price* at the shrine of gold and glitter—when we see women trained to secure *cash* value for her person, without reference to the intellect, character, or disposition of the *master* husband, we cannot but think, that the custom of those countries where females are sold in market to the highest bidder, has not a more deteriorating influence upon the heart and morals, than the more refined manner of fashion and civilization—while the semi-barbarous custom is devoid of the civilized hypocrisy. And when we hear all this cold, heartless artifice called prudence and wisdom—see the happiness of life sacrificed to gain the world's approbation—and truth and feeling immolated upon the altar of vanity—we cannot help wishing very modestly and quietly, that we *had* the power to shock and shame "popular prejudice" out of some of its heartless vanity; not to give it a more severe name.

But we forget: it is not our purpose to inflict a homily upon the public. We are not paid to teach truth, or morality, and our own disposition prompts us more to laugh at, than seek to amend the follies of the world. We profess to belong to the genus who live only in sunny hours, we teach no lesson of providence and care, like the industrious ant—we only seek to enjoy the sun-light and shine, and gild the passing day with the joyous flutter of our tiny wings.

And if our heroine should accomplish what we rashly wished was in our own power—we must be held blameless, as all our fiction is truth, and more than half of our truth, we fear, is fiction.

### CHAPTER III.

WHEN Jessie returned from school, time had softened her grief for her parents, and Mr. Burton could hardly recognize the "little quiet" girl, who had left him but little more than two years, in the joyous, proud, and gay young lady, who without ceremony flung her arms around his neck and greeted him as "uncle." And as in the preceding chapter, we have hastily glanced at her undutiful reception of his expressed wish respecting his foster-son, it is unnecessary to recapitulate more at length their warfare upon the one disputed

question, but now turn to take up the thread of actual life with our historical personages.

Jessie was not a beauty, in the common acceptance of the term; but there was something in the frank originality of her manner, charming and piquant, which created a spell of fascination. Without well knowing why, all, even the sedate, yielded to her saucy witchery. But perhaps the spell was nature. She acted as she felt at the moment—and was as daring, as impulsive. The shackles of forms and ceremonies she flung to the winds, declaring that "rules were made for fools, the same as leading-strings for children, but that one endowed with sense knew how to act, without being constantly reminded of what was proper." And in her vocabulary of sense, it was not proper to do a mean act, but perfectly so, to do queer ones.

But oh, how dull to be mistress of a bachelor's establishment in the country. The extent of Mr. Burton's demesne precluded the companionship of a close neighborhood; and excepting upon extra occasions of civility, Mr. Butler, the clergyman, and his lady composed all who visited upon terms of intimacy, without ceremony. Mr. Butler, although of northern lineage and from the banned Yankee land, was respected as his worth demanded, and confided in more than Mr. Burton ever had done in one so recently known. The pastor of an extended rather than a thickly populated parish, his residence was nearer Mr. Burton's house than that of any other member of his congregation. In a sparse population, two miles is often nearer, in truth, than the next door in a city. Not often a day passed without a call upon one or the other family. And this usually without ceremony; rather as a resting-place for a long walk, or short ride, than as a visit. Mr. Butler, although not named, was incidentally introduced in the first chapter. He had settled in the parish about the time of Jessie's return from school; and from her youth, his own kindness, and Mr. Burton's half expressed wish, became a kind of reference tutor, that she might not forget, for want of use, what she had learned at school. He did not give her lessons, and hear set recitations, but conversed with her upon scientific and philosophic topics, and beside keeping her memory refreshed, gave many new and valuable ideas. They were good friends, in spite of Jessie's whims, and Mr. Butler's exact notions of propriety and sense.

With Mrs. Butler the case was somewhat different. She was precise, and if she had been an old maid, would have been prudish. She could neither understand nor excuse nonsense; nor comprehend how any one could be guilty of the slightest infringement upon the rules of

priety, or the dictates of prudence, as *she* "understood it." In truth, she was a pattern of a perfect lady made by rule, in whose nature there had been a complete transformation, if it ever consisted of aught but a cold intellectualism and a prominent consideration of her own worth and importance. Her sense, intellect, and refined manners commanded respect; but your respect for her excellent qualities was so very strong, that one must have an acute imagination to think of loving her. One would as soon have thought of loving a statue of marble.

Jessie, in writing to the friend and confidant of her school-days, in describing Mrs. Butler said, "Her notions of propriety are the result of a set of square rules, which if she could apply them to the world, would give an uniformity as pleasing as the forest trees all clipped to an exact size and shape. It would destroy the beauty—but what of that, if the pattern was proper for curtailings a pumpkin vine?"

"And her ideas of prudence seem but other terms for mean selfishness. I declare, after I have listened to one of her lectures on prudence and propriety, I cannot tell right from wrong. She supports her theories in a strong sensible manner, and it all sounds so wise, I am astonished that I am not a convert in theory, if not in practice. But there is within me a principle—I know not what it is—that repels her cold, sage, square doctrines—and I am worse with them than I could be without them. They provoke me to do the opposite from what they inculcate, to show that I dare be something beside a model pattern. I believe that I should rather be in an error, with a touch of natural feeling, than be right, proper, and prudent with all her judicious immobility. I verily hate the words of prudence and propriety."

If Jessie could not comprehend the principle which repelled her from Mrs. Butler, it was not so very inexplicable. In Jessie's nature there was a nobleness of mind, almost akin to that "charity which thinketh no evil," nor intends, nor anticipates any: while Mrs. Butler ever suspected ill; and her whole code of ethics was defensive of some wickedness which might arise. She suspected others of as much oppression, injustice, and wrong as she would have been guilty of herself, if fate, or Providence, had not interposed and made her so good, beside gifting her with a kind of intellectual caution, which made her fear the consequences of doing wrong. And that she tolerated Jessie at all, was upon that principle of fear which begets love!

The monotony of life at Mr. Burton's was broken regularly once in a year, by the irruption of Emma Magnum, Jessie's school-friend. And then what *freaks*—

not recorded in the book of etiquette, nor Mrs. Butler's rules of propriety. The two "madcaps," as Mr. Burton called them, kept the whole domain wide awake while Emma's visit lasted.

Emma's beauty was striking. An oval face with perfect Grecian features; a complexion so clear that it seemed as if you could look into the very soul, and dark expressive eyes in which were mirrored life, joyousness, and laughter. And they had never been dimmed by sorrow. The beloved and idolized child of wealthy and noble-minded parents, she had been shielded from care on the one hand, and not spoiled by injudicious indulgence on the other. Her mother had not sought to change her nature, but to train its luxuriance. Her love of the true had not been blighted by the stimulants of the artificial. And when, with generous anger, in defence of the weak, her petit form expanded with the mind's nobleness, she verily looked commanding. But usually it was only like a kind, loving, and joyous child, animated with woman's truthful nobleness. She did not love all of Jessie's faults, but loved her in spite of them. The friendship between the two girls was as ardent as sincere. And, fortunately, circumstances coincided to continue it. Soon after they parted at school (which was near a year before Jessie left), Emma's heart was won by one worthy of it, and one who received her parents' warmest approbation, and thus prevented the friendship of the two girls from being broken by both wanting the same lover; as Jessie had learned to consider him her friend's affianced before she ever met him. It was happy fortune perchance, for even the best friends will grow cold, if both want the same lover. And probably more female friendships are broken from this cause than any other.

"What will you do for a husband, Jessie?" asked Emma, on her second annual visit. "There is no one here who seems eligible, and you are determined about your uncle's wishes respecting his favorite Tom."

"The fates know, but I do not," replied Jessie. "I have made all sorts of fancies about the matter, and see no help, unless the man in the moon will make proposals—I can't believe I was made for an old maid—but where my husband is to come from is a puzzle."

"Why, missis," chimed in Chole, who at her mistress' return home, had resumed her old place of constant attendance, "if you do want to know who you'll have, old Dinah can tell you. She told all about Jack and Julia, and about master's being sick when he had the rumatiz last winter—Oh! she sees wonderful things in a cup."

"Good! good!" exclaimed Jessie, "we

will consult the future and learn beforehand what is to be."

"Yes," replied Emma, who saw no harm in the foolish proposition, "come, send for your sibyl—we have Josephine's example that it is proper, to satisfy Mrs. Butler." And both friends laughed merrily as they despatched Chole for the prophetess.

Nearly an hour elapsed before she returned with her messenger of fate, an old negress, nearly bent double. Her eyes sparkled both with lunacy and delight at being summoned to the young mistress' room. Chole bore in the symbols of mystic fate in the shape of a filled tea-pot and two China cups.

Dinah, with the art of insanity, or covetousness, after the arrangements were completed, said that if they wished good luck, they must first cross the cup with silver.

"And so," said Emma, as she complied with the requisition, and handed the coin to the sibyl, "we cannot even have our fortunes foretold without paying for it!"

"And you, missus," said the beldam, taking up her cup, "will never be crossed in love—here is the heart and ring just as clear as the sun. The heart is yours now, and the ring is close by—you are a happy maid—you'll be a happy wife and mother—four little branches are by you—that means you'll have four children—your life is not troubled, but you'll just be sorrowful for some friend. There's no wonderful things in your life—it's all sunshine—sunshine."

"Give me joy, Jessie," exclaimed Emma, "my fortune is surely short and sweet—may yours be equally so."

"And yours, Miss Jessie," said the prophetess, "is not like Miss Magnum's—here's crosses, death, disappointment, and wrong—if I had not known I could see your father's and mother's graves—and here's a dark man who done wrong, and took what was not his own. You have been wronged, missus, whether you know it or not. But this shows the past—turn another cup and let me see—your sunny face must have some good luck."

"Oh! your luck! Dinah," said Jessie, laughing; "if I turn another cup, I suppose it must be crossed also with silver!"

"As you please, Miss Jessie—thank you," replied Dinah, receiving the coin.

"In the tother cup," resumed the sibyl, "you was all lopped off—kinder lone, and none to love you—there was nuff about you, but they was seeking no good to you—Here 'tis better—here you're close to a good tree all green—There's two branches to the tree—just, you see, yourself and Master Tom—and you'll both settle down here—and here you are nussing a sick man—

just as you do master when he has the rumatiz."

"Why, Dinah," interrupted Jessie, "are you going to make me a nurse instead of a wife—will you not give me a husband, as well as Emma?"

"Why, don't be unpatient, missus," returned Dinah, "wan't I telling you of the husband—it looks as if you'd be 'nited to a branch of the same tree as yourself—both twigs close by, and the heart and ring all to come—as I'ze saying, it looks just like you and Master Tom both one—"

"Master Tom!" interrupted Jessie irritated, "I reckon you took your lesson of your master before you came—you may go."

"And shan't I tell ye about the little branches? you'll have seven children, and their father is a tall, dark man, just such a one as Master Tom will be—"

"Go!" interrupted Jessie imperatively.

"And you'll have seven children," continued the old negress, as she hobbled from the room, "and a pretty time you'll have, Chole, to nuss seven children"—and her voice was lost in the distance.

Emma threw herself upon the floor and laughed immoderately.

"I don't see what you are laughing at," said Jessie pettishly. "A mess of fanfare—nade which uncle sent her to repeat to punish our folly—I wonder how she remembered it."

"Oh, it is useless for you to rebel against fate," returned Emma. "Josephine probably disbelieved, but she became an empress—and you had better yield gracefully to the necessity of the case, and take Master Tom as if you wanted him, rather than—"

"Don't, if you would not make me mad, mention his name. He is my waking nightmare—I can't move, stir, nor speak, but what his name appears like the handwriting upon the wall which made the king of old tremble."

"Why resist?" rejoined Emma; "I have no doubt, from your uncle's extreme partiality, and the servants' respectful attachment, that he is worthy of some kindness from the only heart in the house that does not love him—"

"Emma," interrupted Jessie, "don't irritate me any more—you will join my persecutors also, and seek an alliance with Mrs. Butler, because it is proper! But hear my final and only vow. But stop, I'll parodize one which was broken—but I will keep mine." And she started up in mock heroic, and pronounced the first stanza of an old ballad, only changing it to apply to her particular case. Where she found it, or who was the author, is beyond our researches, but here is her *improvisatore* parody.

"Hear what a freeborn maiden said,  
The bugbear Tom I will not wed;  
Should all the race of nature die,  
And none be left but, he and I;  
For all the gold, for all the gear,  
For all the lands both far and near,  
For all the love, both lost and won,  
I would not wed the bugbear Tom."

"Good, good!" exclaimed Emma, "but you have not forgotten that there was a reply to Norna's rash vow—I will personate the sage and repeat his answer—and I would have you mark well what it says—

"A maiden's vow, old Callum spoke—"

"No, no," interrupted Jessie, "parodize—not the exact copy."

"I will try," returned Emma, "but I don't believe I can."

"A maiden's vow, another spoke,  
Is lightly made and lightly broke:  
The thistle on the mountain's height  
Begins to bloom in purple light;  
The blossoms of our garden's pride,  
Their fragrance fling on summer-tide,  
And Jessie, e'er their bloom be gone,  
May blithely wed the bugbear Tom."

"Well done!" exclaimed Jessie, "and if we are spoiling a good thing, I must go on."

"The goose, say I, the pond's clear breast  
May barter for the blackbird's nest;  
James' sparkling waters backward turn,  
And Blue Ridge fall to crush a worm—  
To shun the wit of woman's tongue,  
Our brave gallants may turn and run;  
But I, were all these marvels done,  
Would never wed the bugbear Tom."

"Shall I keep the conclusion for your wedding," asked Emma, "or will you have the finale now?"

"Now, now," replied Jessie, "for at my wedding with bugbear Tom, I shall never hear it."

"Well, as you will—listen and remember," returned Emma, shaking her finger threateningly.

"Still near the stable's safe warm shade,  
Her quiet nest the grey goose made;  
Still downward flows James' sparkling river,  
And Blue Ridge stands as fast as ever;  
To shun the wit of woman's tongue,  
No brave gallant has fled or run—  
But Jessie's heart is lost and won,  
She's wedded to the bugbear Tom."

The success of the parody restored Jessie's smiles and good-humor.

"Who will deny us genius?" said she.

"But who knows of it?" returned Emma, "what good will it do us without publishing—and it is an interdicted subject by you."

"No, no," rejoined Jessie laughing; "our mutual poetic success inspires me even with courage to brave a lecture upon Tom—come let us go and repeat it to uncle and Mr. Butler."

"But can we remember it?" interposed Emma, doubtingly.

"No matter," returned Jessie; "we can put in something quite as *apropos*—come"

And the two girls bounded off in a joyous mood to inflict their mutual good-humor and lightheartedness upon Mr. Burton and Mr. Butler, who were gravely discussing a question of political economy—the tariff.

"Well, well," said the old gentleman at their eager and hasty entrance into the room—"yes, but go, I want to finish my statements to Mr. Butler—"

"But we have not preferred our request," returned Jessie, laughing, "but you have granted it—and it was for you to listen to our first poetic efforts."

"Nonsense, child," returned Mr. Burton, "your grandmother never—"

"Let her memory and good qualities rest in peace now," interrupted Jessie—"we have consulted the future through a lying oracle—"

"Perhaps no falsehood," interrupted Emma, "although you fain would believe it, because 'master Tom' was given you for a husband, and—"

"Was he? was he?" eagerly interrupted Mr. Burton. "Who was the prophet? I'll give him a dollar—"

"I more than suspect that you did before she repeated her tale," interrupted Jessie.

"I—I—" rejoined the old gentleman, "I know nothing about it—come tell us," and in his delight, he winked at Mr. Butler most knowingly.

But we will do Mr. Burton the justice to state, that he was not in collusion with the ancient sibyl. But whether she saw what she repeated in the magic confusion of the leaves and stems of the Chinese herb, is more than we can tell, not being versed in the mysteries of the art or science of predicting the future from the accidental position of "tea-grounds."

The gentlemen received the young ladies' vaudeville with a hearty burst of merriment.

"Well, well," said Mr. Burton; "pretty good—but don't turn literary ladies—I hate literary women—they've no common-sense—your grandmother—"

"I will surely absolve her memory from all literary aspersion," interrupted Jessie. "But you will remember my vow, and not seek to make me perjure myself!"

"Yes, yes: I'll remember your vow," returned the old gentleman, laughing—"You and I, Miss Emma, will remember to rehearse it at their wedding—"

"But excuse me, Mr. Butler," interposed Jessie, "I have not made due inquiries for Mrs. Butler—I have not seen her these two days, and Emma and I proposed calling upon her this afternoon."

"Pray do," returned Mr. Butler; "she will be pleased to see you, and she has a friend of ours, from the north, to introduce to you. He arrived last evening."

"But if it is a gentleman, Mrs. Butler might think propriety should keep us at

home, until she has brought him here," returned Jessie, archly, slightly emphasizing the word *propriety*.

"Oh, no," rejoined Mr. Butler; "she would regret as much as myself that the presence of our friend should deprive us of the pleasure of your company. Beside, did I not fear that it would interfere with our good friend, Mr. Burton's wishes, I might wish that our friend should become yours also."

"Thank you, thank you," responded Jessie, "that is nearest to a christian wish that I ever had the pleasure of hearing you express—Come, Emma, let us go and see if the realization of Mr. Butler's kind wish would be agreeable to me. I feel just like offering, or taking most any one, to save myself from being sold to bugbear Tom."

And the ladies departed to equip themselves for their proposed visit.

"What is the source of your niece's aversion to your foster-son?" asked Mr. Butler, as they left the room. "I believe she never saw him."

"No," replied Mr. Burton, "if she had, with all her notions, she would have loved him in spite of herself. It is hard to account for a woman's mind, however young she may be."

"But, if you think that a personal acquaintance would remove her prejudice, why don't your son make a visit home? It has been three years since I became your neighbor, and I think he has not been at home during the time."

"There is the dilemma," returned Mr. Burton. "Tom never will come home again, unless Jessie is married or dead."

"Why is he opposed to your desired arrangement?" asked Mr. Butler.

"Why, that is the worst of it," replied Mr. Burton, "Jessie's opposition might be managed, but Tom declares he would not marry her, if she was an angel. And a man's decision is worse than a girl's, who don't know her own mind."

"Has he any previous attachment," continued Mr. Butler, "from which to account for his opposition?"

"No, I think not," returned Mr. Burton. "No: I am sure not—he is too noble and frank to have concealed it from me, if he had."

A servant threw open the door, and Mrs. Butler and her visitor entered. After the necessary introductions and salutations had passed, Mr. Butler inquired if they "met the young ladies." Mrs. Butler replied in the negative.

"Oh, I presume," remarked Mr. Burton, as he despatched a servant to inform them of the presence of visitors, "that they have been delayed by an extra toilet—you know that you gave the information for the occasion," as he looked intelligently towards the strange visitor.

The stranger—but no, we will take a separate chapter to introduce him to the reader.

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## CHAPTER IV.

THE young ladies entered the parlor, and after they had paid their respects to Mrs. Butler, the latter lady rose, and turned to the stranger who had accompanied her, saying, "Miss Graham, I have brought with me my highly esteemed friend, Mr. Dwight—Mr. Dwight, this is Miss Graham, who compels every one to love her, even if they would rebel."

"Miss Magnum, Mr. Dwight."

At the moment Mr. Dwight's name was pronounced, Jessie's eyes dilated, and there was a perceptible nervous movement in her manner as she received his salutations. But she recovered instantly, and said to Mrs. Butler, interrogatively,

"The Mr. Dwight, I presume, whom I have so often heard your name."

Mrs. Butler replied in the affirmative.

"Then pardon me, Mr. Dwight, for saying at the commencement of our acquaintance, that I do hope we shall have the power to make you less good, instead of your making us better," said Jessie in a playful manner, as she seated herself.

"And you will pardon me, Miss Graham," returned Mr. Dwight, "for saying that your wish is more frank than kind."

"But in my catalogue," resumed Jessie, in the same manner, "there is scarce aught unpardonable, but extreme wickedness, or superior goodness—"

"A singular classification," interrupted Mr. Butler.

"But extreme wickedness," continued Jessie, "every body condemns—and extreme excellence is hardly more pardonable. You, my kind preceptor, are ever teaching me to avoid extremes—and I do so hate very good people."

"If you only dislike very good people," rejoined Mr. Dwight, "you must certainly have extremely kind feelings towards the majority."

"But Mrs. Butler," returned Jessie, "has learned me to fear you, sir, as very good."

"To hate me then, according to your own definition," replied Mr. Dwight, quickly.

"Oh, no! I do not hate except from ocular demonstration—and I believe I petitioned that you would not prove yourself so superior in excellence, as to compel me to the extreme feeling."

"If my superior merit is to be my only bar to your approbation," responded Mr. Dwight, gallantly, "I am assured of receiving your warmest commendation."

"Oh, I am so happy, if you are not so very, very good as I had learned to fear you," exclaimed Jessie, with child-like, artless earnestness, which made her auditor half start as if from surprise, or emotion.

"She has woman's grace joined to the fearless frankness of childhood; she is unconscious of the rudeness of her remarks," was his mental explanation. And if he had been entirely honest with his own conscience, he would have acknowledged that the very rudeness had given him secret satisfaction. What man was ever offended by a rudeness which acknowledged his superiority?

And Jessie had unconsciously accomplished what she would have most wished to do, if she had had time to premeditate and arrange her object. She had startled him out of his usual wise analysis of character—he would think of her, and perhaps, when free from the fascination of her manner, condemn instead of excusing her. But he would think of her, ponder on her words, and endeavor to arrive at the motive which prompted their utterance.

And when a woman can compel a man to think of her, when she can, uninvited, enter the sanctuary of his leisure musings, she has the vantage-ground; and there must be some strong reason if she fails to conquer, if she desires it.

As soon as the company had taken their leave, Jessie fled to her own apartment; and whether to laugh or cry, be merry or sad, was the question, as she flung herself upon a seat, and covered her eyes with her hands, to think over intently every incident of the last hour. Before the question had been canvassed in all its bearings, Emma sought her, and relieved her from choosing between the two apparent alternatives, by giving her an opportunity to vent her feelings in words.

"Let me give you joy," said Emma, as she entered the room laughing, "upon your conquest—"

"Conquest!" repeated Jessie, contemptuously.

"Surely: Mr. Dwight's wonderment will end in admiration, and admiration is but another term for incipient love," rejoined Emma.

"Oh, how I hate him," said Jessie, in a tone too sincere for a young lady to put to such harsh words.

"Why? because he is so very, very good!" asked Emma, mimicking the child-like tone which Jessie had used in repeating the same words.

"Good!" exclaimed Jessie, indignantly. "His goodness is coldness—his merit, a stiff, unbending presumption upon his own excellence and wisdom—and his ideas of propriety, an adhesion to the antiquated notions of his great, great grandmother.

He would not stay his foot from crushing a worm, unless he had been formally introduced to it."

"Why, Jessie, what is the matter?" asked Emma, sobered from her mirth by her friend's earnestness.

The sympathy expressed in Emma's tones humbled Jessie's pride, and she burst into tears.

Emma, almost beside herself in witnessing her friend's inexplicable grief, threw her arms around her neck, and sought by carresses, rather than words, to express the sympathy she felt, and soothe the sorrow which she could not understand.

"Oh, Emma," exclaimed Jessie, as her excitement passed, "you will not hate me!"

"Hate you," repeated Emma in bewilderment, "why do you fear it?"

Jessie pondered upon the question a few moments, and then looking up, she met the inquiring gaze of her friend.

"I will tell you," she replied, "and it is my only secret. I frankly acknowledged that my act was presuming, but it proceeded—But I will offer no apology for it—I can meet the consequences—But I don't want you to blame me. If Mrs. Butler scowls and frowns, I can bear it—and if Uncle Burton scolds, I can coax him into good-humor. But Emma, if there comes a shade on your heart towards me, I shall then bitterly feel the consequences of my want of propriety."

"Forget Mrs. Butler now," rejoined Emma, "and do tell me what Mr. Dwight has to do with your uneasiness."

"Mr. Dwight is Mrs. Butler's criterion of everything right and good," commenced Jessie.

"Well, well; as your uncle would say," chimed in Emma, "is Mr. Dwight's goodness the cause of your grave face?"

"No; but his unbending, precise fastidiousness," returned Jessie.

"I can't conceive what—" began Emma.

"I know it," interrupted Jessie, "and I have been screwing my courage up to the confessing point these ten minutes."

"After you left last year," she continued, "I was very lonely, and was with Mrs. Butler much. Mr. Dwight was often spoken of, and she related so many incidents exhibiting the most noble, unselfish goodness, that I half fell in love with him—"

"But I did not know that love turned to hatred without cause or offence," interrupted Emma.

"Nor does it," returned Jessie.

"Oh, I understand," said Emma, "all your emotion, anger, and rudeness to him, was your way of expressing interest—'concealed love,' my new model of 'patience on a monument!'"

"You mistake," resumed Jessie, "he has given cause and offence, although mine was the first offence."

Emma opened her eyes wonderingly, as Jessie continued.

"I wrote him a letter, not a very sage one I will confess, but—"

"Then he knows you," quickly interrupted Emma.

"No, no; I did not sign my own name, and I think I took sufficient precaution so that he cannot find out positively. But if he mentions it to Mrs. Butler, they will suspect me," replied Jessie.

"How could you be so imprudent?" asked Emma, in a sorrowing tone. "But let me see the letters; did he answer it?"

"Yes," returned Jessie; "and it is the answer which makes me feel so vexed."

"You will remember," she continued, as she opened her desk and took out the letters, "that my only object was to draw a reply from him, and get up a correspondence, if I could."

"Well, you gained your object," remarked Emma, as she glanced at the superscription. "What a name!" she exclaimed laughing; "did you select it from the classics?"

"But read the letters," returned Jessie, "and judge for yourself, whether mine deserved the severity of his short reply."

Emma first carefully perused Jessie's letter, and as we are privileged, we will do the same.

"DEAR SIR,

"Your fame and excellence have reached my ears, even in a distant land; and my impression of your goodness is so lively, that I fain would profit by your teaching. As a personal acquaintance is impossible, can I, by appealing to your benevolence and philanthropy, persuade you to occasionally direct a sheet filled with good counsel and noble thoughts, to the address appended to this communication? I know it is said that you are reserved towards, and distrustful of woman. But will you not make an exception in my favor?"

"I am young, but still surrounded by sources of perplexity and anxiety. I have confidence in your judgment; and that you are disinterested, would be evidence of the purity and singleness of your counsel."

"Not but I am encircled by the care of kind and loving hearts; but their instruction savors so much of book rules, that, even against my desire, I rebel. I have a horror of learned things. Give me nature—the free impulse of the heart, and I can worship its possessor. Novelty also has a charm for me, which mere wisdom will never possess."

"I love the good and true; but I cannot endure to have my imagination cramped in the stocks of mere forms and ceremonies. I cannot believe that honest impulse is a crime to be driven from our

natures. Am I so very wrong? Is life but a set of rules where the measure of each ingredient is marked down with the precision of a receipt in a cook-book? to produce the result of excellence must every case be a pound of this, and an ounce of that, and so much sugar, and a named quantity of spice! Truth, like the grand ingredient of flour in pastry, should form the basis of character. But may there not be used individual discretion in mingling the spice and sweetening of life, love and pleasure?"

"I, for one, cannot admit that the same pleasures which amused my good grandmother would produce the same result with me. And, perchance, I never should have loved my grandfather! Still, they were good, wise, and happy. But their life would make me miserable."

"And if my romance be innocent, and my fancy pure, is their indulgence reprehensible? Will you not kindly and frankly answer these queries?"

"Do not say nay; that you know not who asks the questions. Is a personal acquaintance indispensable to interest your kindly feelings? if you can benefit another, will you not dare to trample upon the dull formula of schools? Think you that the guardian angels of erring beings wait for an introduction to do good to the objects of their care? Then, my dear sir, fear not to imitate the example of these pure existences, which are messengers from the source of all goodness. Be my guardian angel, and a life of gratitude shall be your reward."

"My incognito is safe, and it would be a useless endeavor to seek to penetrate the mystery. And, perchance, did I know you personally, your influence might lack the power which it now possesses."

"As an offset to your merit, there might be some want of charity—some stiffness of manner—some impress of superiority, which might awe or disgust. I love truth; but I would that its representatives appear like unto its own graceful beauty."

"My judgment admits that superior personal beauty may cover a heart distorted with every moral deformity, and that a plain person may possess every virtue and excellence. But my feelings reject the admission; and when I look upon elegant and graceful proportions, I cannot but think the inward man as fair and true as the outward. On the contrary, I cannot endure plain awkward people—ugliness seems but the type of moral deformity, and excites my pity and commiseration. May not the want of personal beauty be the judgment of God for the sins of the parent? even such as is visited 'unto the third generation?'"

"But I shall frighten you with the length of my communication—and I will not ex-



tend it beyond praying pardon for my presumption.

"With the most respectful esteem,  
"Your obedient servant."

We will not add the name; as, knowing the extreme partialty of our countrymen for high-sounding and euphonious titles, we fear its publication might inflict an evil on the rising generation.

Emma perused the letter with a quiet smile, but without remark took up the rejoinder.

Jessie watched her countenance during the perusal, and as she saw Emma's smile, breathed more freely.

"The bear!" was Emma's exclamation when she finished the reply.

The tears started in Jessie's eyes at the exclamation, which sounded so much like sympathy with her feelings.

"A gentleman," continued Emma, "would not have answered you at all, or would have deemed it due to his own dignity to have replied in a gentlemanly manner."

As it was very brief, we will favor the reader with a perusal, permitting generous or precise dispositions to construe it to their own taste. Although none may be as lenient to Jessie's error as the loving Emma.

"I ACKNOWLEDGE the reception of a letter from one whom, in charity, I will believe very young.

"In boldness of speech, and error of sentiment, I have never seen anything purporting to come from a *lady's* pen, which equalled this communication. There can be no excuse for such perversion of truth in one as well taught as the language of this singular epistle seems to indicate. It must be willful error. And I can only pray that God may preserve you from the dangers of an unlicensed imagination.

"I will only add that I have no time to devote to correspondents ashamed of their own names, and beg that I may not be troubled with more communications.

"A. DWIGHT."

"Do you think that I deserved as bad as this?" asked Jessie, taking up the bitter missal of rebuke.

"Don't ask me, Jessie, to justify your act. It was a trespass upon propriety—perchance, somewhat presumptuous. But Mr. Dwight's reply is not such a one as was due to his own dignity. A gentleman never forgets to be a gentleman; and kindness and gentlemanly breeding would have prompted more courtesy, consideration, and urbanity than he has seen proper to extend to you—"

"In mercy, Emma, don't go on in that prosy, preaching style;" interrupted Jessie. "If I am to have a sermon, take your text,

and wake me up when you have finished your discourse."

"You will find the words which I have selected for your consideration, my hearer," commenced Emma in a tone which would have done more credit to the stage than pulpit, "in Burton's catalogue of proprieties, at the top of every page—'young woman, remember thy grandmother in the days of thy youth, that it may be well with thee in the land of the living.' Let the lessons which these words inculcate sink deep into your—. Asleep, my hearer!—then I am done."

"Thank you, thank you!" exclaimed Jessie, starting up from her personated slumber; "come now, do talk sense—what shall I do?"

"That was what I was going to ask you," returned Emma. "Do you think there is danger of your being suspected?"

"No," replied Jessie; "not unless he has preserved the fated scroll for Mrs. Butler's inspection."

"No fear of that," interrupted Emma; "undoubtedly he reduced it to ashes as soon as might be, and then purified his fingers by the fumes of brim—Lucifer matches."

"You are worse than I am," responded Jessie, laughing.

"But I use discretion," returned Emma; "I never say things to shock people. And if *half* betrayed into it, correct my expression so quickly that it is swallowed in the sound of the succeeding word."

"Yes, I know," said Jessie, in reply, "'discretion is the better part of valor,' and in the estimation of the world, very near the *summum bonum* of virtue."

"Then," said Emma, "you must learn to be very good, that is, very discreet; and fear—"

"Fear!" repeated Jessie, indignantly, "don't appeal to that mean principle of cowardice! It is the propelling power of all decent sin! Cowardly children obey their parents from *fear* of the whipping. Cowardly men keep within the pale of civil law from *fear* of the vindictive retribution upon which all law is based. And cowardly Christians join the church, and profess to love God, from *fear* of the consequences of disobedience."

"Am I listening to a lecture on ethics, or metaphysics?" quietly interrupted Emma. "Please name the subject of your remarks, and I will listen to gain wisdom."

"Nonsense!" returned Jessie, a little ashamed of her warmth, "you know it always puts me in a fever to have any one intimate that I ought to be afraid of something."

"I trust that you fear to do wrong," said Emma, seriously.

"No, not fear," replied Jessie; "but love to do right."

"You betrayed your love, then, in writing to Mr. Dwight," quickly interrupted Emma.

"The act is done," returned Jessie, warmly, "and I would rather you would help me to seek revenge for its punishment, than harp upon my want of worldly wisdom. In writing an anonymous letter I violated no principle of right or justice—"

"Will you please look and see what I see," interrupted Emma, quietly placing a dressing-glass upon the table immediately before her excited friend.

"Pish!" said Jessie, pushing the glass from her, "I don't want to contemplate my beauty now."

"It was your want of it to which I wished to call your attention," interrupted Emma.

"And so you would intimate that my want of a pretty face must bar all hopes of revenge."

"Not that," replied Emma, "I would have piqued your vanity not to destroy the beauty of a pleasing, if not a pretty face, by anger. Always when I used to get angry or out of humor, mamma would make me look at myself in a glass until I was pleasant again."

"A novel punishment, truly," returned Jessie, laughing. "Why did you not communicate it to Mrs. Walker, when she used to be at her wits' ends to keep me from electrifying the whole school, occasionally, by my sudden gusts of unlady-like passion, as she termed my honest indignation?"

"Because I had no particular inclination to do penance for doing good," replied Emma. "And you will remember that I was sometimes your partner in error there. But now I am very wise; two years your senior, and have a devoted swain, which, if nothing else, would give me the precedence."

"I wish the swains were all at the bottom of the sea," said Jessie, pettishly.

"And I trust that your wish proceeded from your love to Mr. Dwight, rather than envy of mine for Henry," returned Emma.

"But do tell me, what is the fatality about me, which makes every gentleman who comes within the reach of me, a source of uneasiness and vexation?"

"I am sure I don't know," replied Emma, "unless you were born for an old maid."

"Heaven avert that calamity!" ejaculated Jessie. "I would sooner—"

"Master wants to know if you have forgot it's tea time?" interrupted Chole, entering the room with the abruptness and ill-concealed displeasure of a favorite attendant, when they want to reprove the carelessness of their masters or mistresses.

"Well, well," exclaimed Emma, "we shall get a fine scolding."

"Grandmother's ghost will make a fourth one at the table to-night," remarked Jessie, as they left the room.

But tea passed without any serious explosion of Tom or the grand parent. Emma's good-nature was ever an invulnerable shield from impatience towards one of Mr. Burton's age, and for whom she entertained as deep respect. And Jessie was too much preoccupied in scheming some revenge for Mr. Dwight to be impertinently saucy. And from the same cause Mr. Burton beat five times out of six at backgammon after tea, which put him in high good-humor.

## CHAPTER V.

MR. DWIGHT'S stay was prolonged to some weeks with his friends, and almost daily he met with Jessie. The suspicion that she was his anonymous correspondent never entered his mind, as in fact the letter and his reply had both faded very soon from his memory. At the time he had thought it some contemptible hoax, and then it was forgotten.

Jessie's impression of him from Mrs. Butler was correct. He was a noble-minded, generous young man, although the brilliancy of his talents and virtues were both somewhat obscured by the trammels of prejudice and education. He was scrupulous in the fulfillment of all duties; and his very exactness gave the coloring to his acts, that it was duty instead of pleasure. To his manners also was attached the preciseness which regulated his every act and thought.

If he could be charmed or driven from the defined position, or calculated intention, he was very much like a gallant generous hearted gentleman, acted upon by impulses of pure and noble feelings. But the trouble was to get him beyond the soundings of the chart where he understood every shoal and sand-bar.

Jessie, to him, was a *sui generis*, and without exertions had immersed him in the deep waters of supposition and inquiry, and, consequently, he remained at her mercy or generosity. When with him, or from him, her whole study during his visit was to tantalize, annoy, and vex him. But he attributed her efforts to anything but malice, ignorant as he was of any offence towards her. Hence her acts were ascribed to playfulness and vivacity, joined to want of knowledge of the world; and unconsciously, she was weaving around him the very meshes which her spite would have netted, if she could have decided upon a deliberate plan of action.

"Your young friend, Miss Graham," said Mr. Dwight one day to Mrs. Butler, "is a riddle to me—I know not that I ever saw such vivacity and spirit joined with the same frank simplicity. It seems as though there was no thought in her mind which she would conceal—"

"I believe," returned Mrs. Butler hastily, very like an interruption, "that you have studied Miss Graham with more earnestness than you ever did one of our sex before."

"And is there any reason why I should not pursue the study?" frankly asked Mr. Dwight; "your tone rather than your words betray some slight displeasure."

"You may study as much as you please," responded Mrs. Butler, "provided that you will pursue it coolly as you would some new genus of plants. But I must interdict any graver or warmer interest."

"Why so?" pursued Mr. Dwight in a cool tantalizing tone, but a close observer might have noticed a slight compression of the lips, as if to subdue an internal spasm.

"Why so?" repeated Mrs. Butler a little warmly, "I do not think you ever met a woman less calculated for a wife. She is passionate, heedless, reckless of consequences, and imprudent in the extreme."

"The happy carelessness of a child, Mrs. Butler," remarked Mr. Dwight, "who fears no evil, because she thinks none."

"Ahem!" thought Mrs. Butler. But the ejaculation and the contingencies were suppressed, and she continued, in a rather maternal manner:

"But, my dear Charles, we will not discuss Miss Graham's merits or demerits. What I should condemn might be the attraction to a gay young man—"

"I am not a very young man," interrupted Mr. Dwight, "and I am sure there is nothing in my character to merit the accusation of frivolity."

"Certainly not," returned Mrs. Butler, "and therefore my warning of her lightness. She is not, as I said, calculated for *your wife*; and it would show a want of prudence and consideration, which I could not deem you guilty of for a moment, to contemplate the matter." "Besides," continued Mrs. Butler, "her uncle intends her for his foster-son. A prudent and discreet arrangement; as it will keep the fine old estate unbroken."

"And what does Miss Graham say to the arrangement?" asked Mr. Dwight. "If I mistake not, motives of prudence and caution would have but little weight with her."

"Oh, of course, she manifests downright opposition," answered Mrs. Butler. "She would not be in character, unless she opposed everything which did not emanate from her own whimsical fancies. But she never has seen the foster-son, and I think Mr. Burton has some plan in his head to

bring about their meeting under circumstances where her obstinacy will not be aroused, or her suspicion excited. But this is only supposition, from some accidental words, and Mr. Burton's positive manner."

"But supposing they don't fancy each other on a personal acquaintance," pursued Mr. Dwight.

"There is but little fear of that," returned Mrs. Butler. "Every one speaks in the highest terms of Tom, as Mr. Burton calls him; and from description I should think him just the one calculated to win the fancy of Miss Jessie—proud, spirited, gay, and good-humored. With such a rival, you would have but little to hope, as Miss Jessie would prefer the gay to the sedate—good-humor before talents or worth." "I do hope," she continued, seeing that her companion made no reply, "that it will all go as Mr. Burton wishes it, as it would be a most excellent, proper, and prudent match."

For once in his life, Mr. Dwight, in his own way, could have cursed proper, prudent things. And aware that there was no safety for him but in flight, the next day he rode over to Mr. Burton's, and bid his too fascinating friends farewell; and the morning after departed for his northern home. And did he carry the image of Jessie Graham with him? Perhaps so. The light of a bright eye sometimes, in imagination, threw a halo over the dull page of philosophy; and, perchance, a smile flitted over his serious countenance, as fancy portrayed some witty remark from pouting lips, as the solution of an abstruse question in metaphysics. But Charles Dwight had been too well educated, and was too noble-minded to interfere in proper, prudent family arrangements. But, possibly, he sometimes dreamed bright dreams, which would have shocked the nerves of his calculating, proper friend Mrs. Butler. But what if he did? Many wise men during some period of their lives have dreamed day dreams and indulged in speculations which, if published, would have brought no credit to their wisdom. It has been wittily, if not wisely said, that the difference between a wise man and a fool was, that the former knew how to conceal the folly of his thoughts, while the latter published it. After all, there is not a vast difference in the merit of the case, between being honestly foolish and cunningly wise. Neither character accomplishes much good, nor much evil, to the body politic of society.

Mr. Dwight's departure was welcomed by Jessie with unfeigned delight. It relieved her from the constant apprehension of discovery or suspicion. And Mr. Burton also felt a relief from the fear which had begun to haunt him, during the latter part of the stay of the young man. He was

too good an observer not to see that Jessie was sometimes acting a part, and that Emma watched her with uneasiness. Having but one source of anxiety, his fears were excited that Mr. Dwight might make himself too agreeable, and interrupt the consummation of his plot. This plotting and setting snares to catch the little wight, Love, is miserably stupid business for sensible people!

But when Mr. Dwight returned the next season, Mr. Burton's discretion broke the bounds of silence, and he openly taxed Jessie with receiving him as a lover.

The idea was new to her, as she thought her bearing towards him was calculated to produce an opposite effect. But it suggested the possibility that a quiet flirtation might be the means of the revenge which she still desired. Therefore, she did not deny the charge, nor use any means to disprove it; but bore her uncle's raillery and petulance with the patience of a martyr. Mrs. Butler was in a fever of impatience for fear the imprudent predilection of her friend would betray itself, and lead him into the impropriety of uniting himself with one not calculated to make a proper wife after her own pattern.

Mr. Butler was more seriously annoyed. He entertained a more just estimate of all parties than his wife. He esteemed all more, felt an honest desire for their happiness, and was deeper in the confidence of their conflicting wishes. Within the circle of his acquaintance there was no young man towards whom he entertained a deeper respect, and for whom he felt a more ardent affection, than Charles Dwight. He was to him as a younger brother. And had it not been for Mr. Burton's cherished wishes respecting his foster-son, and consequent bitter disappointment if Jessie should wed another, he would have perceived the growing attachment of his young friend with much pleasure. He regarded Jessie's effervescent spirits in a much more charitable light than Mrs. Butler, and would have had no fears that Charles' prudent guiding would not have calmed her down into an amiable and discreet woman. But aware that the union of his foster-children was almost necessary to Mr. Burton's happiness, he saw with much pain the apparent channel to which the wreck of both friends' hopes was tending.

Indeed, to him, Mr. Burton had intrusted his plot, and much depended upon his management. When his aid had been solicited, he had remonstrated quite warmly upon the execution of the plan, but the old man was not to be reasoned out of it; and for the sake of not having the matter intrusted to one with less affection and interest for the welfare of the whole family, he, at last, reluctantly consented to become

prime minister of the manœuvre. But of all this Mrs. Butler was ignorant. He had the prudence not to intrust the secret to her keeping; not from fear of her betraying it, but because she might mar its execution by too earnest zeal.

Jessie, ignorant of all the mines of intrigue and stratagem, which were preparing to blow up her vows and protestations, was quietly scheming her own mischief.

And this, gracious reader (if you have not flung down our little volume in vexation before you have reached this page), brings us back to the opening of our tale, where our heroine had won an apparent ungracious assent for her proposed pleasure tour.

And now to define the position and aim of each character which we have introduced in *propria persona*, as we launch them into the whirl of the plot, counterplot, stratagem, and manœuvre.

Mr. Burton's aim was by any honorable means to effect the marriage of his foster-son and niece. Jessie was after revenge upon the proud wisdom of Mr. Dwight, and consequently involving him personally, as well as the qualities of his character. Mr. Dwight was seeking Jessie's affections, while he honestly believed himself only indulging in the pleasure which her sunny smile afforded him, and not interfering with proper family arrangements. Mr. Butler was aid-de-camp to Mr. Burton, to whom he was a confidant, rather than an adviser, of his measures. But, being honored with the secrets of his general, he could not in honor betray the tactics to be employed, nor warn those towards whom they were directed.

Mrs. Butler was the umpire of prudence and propriety, carefully guarding her two goddesses (of all that was excellent in her estimation) from the profanation of the natural impulses of any persons who came within the pale of her influence. And all of them were at war with nature and truth. If matrimony was designed by the Creator for the happiness of sentient beings, he did not intend that it should be but the consummation of cunningly contrived plots, and the prudent conclusion of intrigue. If love is one of the holiest attributes of our nature, next in purity to our adoration of the Supreme Being, it is not to be compelled, bought, or sold, or given from motives of cool calculation. It must gush spontaneously from the heart's pure springs, like leaping waters from the mountain's side.

Charles Dwight was animated by more of the true than any of the others. But he was so surrounded by the meshes of prejudice, or education, which is but another name for prejudice, and acted upon by the false position of others, that he could not grope his way out of the dark-

ness of falsehood. It was like a game of blindman's-buff, with the whole party blinded. None of them could, in truth, tell where they should land, of whether or not they were not forming plans for the destruction of their own happiness.

But such is life. We blindly seek to frame the structure of our joys, and murmur at the sorrows and ills consequent upon humanity; instead of trusting with faith that the Great Love has ordered all for our best good.

## CHAPTER VI.

OH, the horror and confusion of preparation for a journey! If there is any of the minor ills of life which we pray more heartily to be delivered from than others, it is the bustle of a young miss preparing for a tour of conquests, and that of a young gentleman going to sea, who leaves an anxious and careful mother at home. The paraphernalia of a woman's wardrobe was never intended for the circumference of bandboxes and trunks. There are so many little indispensables attached to the mystery of a lady's toilet which require space, that it seems impossible to carry all the necessities, unless she can at once pack up her dressing-room and closet. What to take! what to leave! where to place this! and where will that be the least injured! Oh! it is a Babel of indecisions and queries which destroys the quiet of the whole family.

And in the case of the opposite gender, nothing would satisfy the anxious maternal parent, but to pack up the oven and Betty, to keep the absent one supplied with fresh cakes and warm biscuit. What a blessing it is, that all the conveniences of civilization are not, under all circumstances, portable, or every journey would be like the wanderings of the Israelites, a caravan of household goods.

The preliminaries of Jessie's journey were arranged with due dispatch, or as the reader will understand, the previous arrangements were published to those interested.

Mr. Butler was commander-in-chief and general protector of the party. Mrs. Butler was duenna in particular, and minister of proprieties. Jessie, with her fancies and love of mischief, was the army in general and body politic to be guarded, guided, and gulled. Mr. Dwight's presence had not been anticipated, and was decidedly *mal-a-propos*, as it might mar the success of the campaign. Emma was written to and solicited to accompany the party. The invitation was readily accepted, and Mr. and Mrs. Magnum were to join the main army at the north, some few weeks later.

And either as a recruit and trusty soldier, or as an honorable volunteer in the ranks, Henry Raymond, Emma's lover and affianced, was to form an advance guard—not always with the main body, but sufficiently near to be ready to aid in cases of danger, or emergency.

A few evenings before the eventful departure, and after Emma's arrival, Mr. Dwight was, as usual, escorting the ladies on their evening walk.

"And, ladies," said he, in continuation of some remark upon the anticipated pleasure, "I suppose you intend to go forth like the husbandman to the harvest to reap—but you seek sheaves of hearts instead of grain."

"That is my intention," frankly replied Jessie; "but Emma, having filled the granary of her affections, will seek no new crops."

"Then, I am to understand from your frank admission that the granary of your heart is empty?" continued Mr. Dwight, in the same light tone, but particularly addressing Jessie.

"No, no," she replied; "I have a cat and a dog, Chole and uncle, and a pet goslin stacked away in its inmost recesses."

"And which am I to rank as first in your affections?" he inquired, "for, from your classification, I am at some loss."

"Oh, the largest," she returned; "I love everything according to its size."

"Perhaps a just, if not a happy distinction," continued the gentleman. "But shall you class your lovers upon the same principle?"

"No; lovers are more like dry goods—it is not always the largest parcel that is the most valuable."

"And shall you examine your lovers as you ladies are wont to do dry goods when you go shopping? that is, look at all, and then select but the one article desired."

"Why, I shall not want but one lover to keep," responded Jessie laughing; "but I have too well learned my sex's tact at cheapening to take the first pattern I look at. You gentlemen," she continued, "with all your horror of shopping, if you were going to purchase an article which was to last as long as a husband is hoped to, would not take the first sample offered. You would look round for the best of the kind."

"Your theory is perhaps correct," returned Mr. Dwight, more gravely; "but will you have no compassion for the disappointed merchants who had hoped that their goods might please your taste?"

"Oh, disappointments are the inevitable result of trade, and if I don't select their wares, they may find some one whose fancy is more easily suited."

"A common, if not a pleasing consolation," remarked Mr. Dwight, in return.

"What have you to say on this subject, Emma?" asked Jessie, in the same breath.

"Nothing," returned Emma; "I have been waiting to hear what you would say next. You generally spoil the argument of your theories before you finish defining their position."

"Thank you; thank you—your hint is sufficient," was Jessie's rejoinder, and the subject was dropped.

A greater part of the time during the walk, Mr. Burton had been in sight of the trio, and had noted with anything but satisfaction the animated conversation kept up between Mr. Dwight and Jessie. He, also, had noticed Emma's abstracted manner, and that she had hardly joined in the discussion.

"A fine evening and a pleasant walk, I trust," was his salutation as he joined them before they reached the house. They severally assented that it had been "delightful," "charming," and "agreeable." Verily, adjectives are the most expressive part of speech, for they convey meaning where there is no sense.

"And pray, Miss Emma," continued the old gentleman, "can you tell me the subject which so deeply engaged the attention of your companions, for I noticed that you were a listener instead of a talker?"

"Oh, it was relative to brontology, and Emma don't understand it," was Jessie's answer, before Emma could reply.

"Bron-tol-o-gy!" repeated Mr. Burton, pronouncing each syllable with emphatic distinctness.

"And pray what is that?"

"A philosophical discourse upon thunder," returned Jessie. "And we out-theorized Professor Espy, the clerk of the weather for the United States Government. Indeed, I mean to apply to the next administration to displace him and appoint me."

"I believe Congress makes that appointment," corrected Mr. Dwight.

"Well, no matter who or what," pursued Jessie; "I shall apply to the powers that be, and if fitness is a recommendation, I shall surely succeed him in office."

"You are fit for a lightning conductor," responded Mr. Burton.

"Thank you, thank you, uncle—that means that I am refined steel, does it not?" asked Jessie.

"No, saucebox: that like attracts like," said the old gentleman, laughing.

"Oh, how little you know about brontology!" exclaimed Jessie. "It is opposing qualities which possess the power of attraction. And there is a very learned and forcible dissertation upon the subject by—"

"Quack, quack, quack!" was one of Jessie's pets' welcome, and the interruption to her scientific discourse upon storms.

"Ah, my gozzy, you believe all that I

say, you love of a little green thing!" was her commencement of a string of endearments, which would have done honor to a young mother talking unintelligible nonsense to her infant.

"Mr. Dwight, this is one of my loves, which has a warm corner in my heart," she continued.

"And any man must feel flattered to be permitted possession of the other corner," said Mr. Burton sarcastically, as he entered the door.

"Oh, you have that, uncle," returned Jessie, laughing.

"Girls must have something to love," was Mr. Burton's rejoinder, "if it is nothing but goslings—"

"And old bachelor uncles," said Jessie, finishing the remark for him.

At last the morning of departure arrived. Trunks, bandboxes, and servants, all duly marked, were deposited in and on the carriages, and the adieus were briefly but not sadly repeated, and the party departed. Two days after, without accident or adventure, they embarked in the steamboat at Fredericksburg for Baltimore.

The afternoon after their embarkation was sultry and oppressive, and Jessie, as soon as the darkness had veiled the surrounding objects, had retired to rest. Youth and fatigue soon forget the anticipations of the one in the weariness of the other, and she soon slept too sound for even dreams.

Her slumber was broken by a piercing scream, and starting upon her elbow she saw the ladies in the cabin rushing towards the door, while a chorus of terrific cries arose from almost every person present. A few, who were speechless with fright and paralyzed by terror, sat with clasped hands and blanched cheeks; while those struggling to escape from the cabin, were groaning in different notes of agony, after the first shriek of horror. The boat was pitching fearfully and careened, and then, as if laboring with the elements, slowly righted. It was apparent that the inmates of the cabin had not generally retired, as but few of the ladies were in their night dresses.

But an instant passed before Jessie comprehended that they were in fearful danger, and sprang from her berth to Emma's, which was the next one towards the door. She had clasped Emma's hand as the boat pitched, and at that instant arose the united, deafening shriek of fear.

"Hush!" exclaimed Jessie, stretching forth her hand commandingly towards the terrified ladies. No one noticed the exclamation; and, as the boat righted, their discordant groans and half ejaculations were even more terrible than the simultaneous scream of terror. "Silence!" she again exclaimed, springing upon a seat

which raised her above the heads of her nearly frantic companions. "In God's name, silence! would ye rush into His presence with this frightful clamor! Pray, pray to be delivered from peril, or to be resigned to His will."

"Ladies," said the captain of the boat, coming forward, "it is a fearful tempest, but I trust we are not in danger. The rain will come soon, which will allay the fury of the wind, and the boat is firm and seaworthy. But I have heard a voice which has given good counsel. Screams can do you no good—prayer may. And be assured—"

A tremendous crash of thunder drowned the closing of his sentence.

"Oh, that Henry was here!" said Emma, as she clasped Jessie in fright.

"He could do no good," returned Jessie; "let us be thankful that he is safe from this peril."

The lightning's lurid glare was almost continuous; and the roar of the thunders was interrupted only by the quick crash which ushered in each successive peal. It was a fearful tempest; and although the rain fell in torrents, the wind but slightly abated. It had ceased blowing with the sudden violence with which the storm had commenced; but it still ploughed the waves into rough furrows, and strained the boat in every plank and timber.

The women hastily robed themselves, at least, those who had undressed, and sought the protection of their husbands, fathers, and brothers. And if Henry Romaine had been there, one would have sought safety from the elements' warfare in the care of a lover.

The passengers huddled together on the enclosed part of the main-deck, as much for companionship as to escape the close, confined air of the cabins. Danger drives men to seek the sympathy of their fellow men. It is only in safety, free from care and anxiety, that man rejects the affinity of kind. Isolated instances may be found where deceit, oppression, and unkindness have driven men from the pale of society with bitter scorn—but these are rare.

The captain, anxious to provide for the comfort of the passengers, had placed sofas, settees, and chairs in the centre of the deck, and they were grouped now, in silence, or speaking in low tones of courage and consolation to each other, around the cabin door and in the centre of the deck. By tacit consent they crowded close together, and avoided proximity to the windows.

The travelers of our party were seated on one settee—Mrs. Butler at one end, and Mr. Butler beside her; Emma next, and Mr. Dwight between her and Jessie.

Hours rolled on and the tempest scarcely abated, except there were longer intervals between the claps of thunder, and the sky

was for moments veiled in darkness, instead of being lighted constantly by the vivid flashes of lightning.

Seated where they were, the sea was hid from their view, and they could only judge of the rough violence of the waves, by the rocking and laboring motion of the boat. Jessie, wearied by the confinement of her position, and perhaps excited rather than unnerved by the danger, rose and passed to the windows to look upon the wild majesty of the winds and waters.

She had stood there for a long length of time, watching the tumults of the waves, as the lightning gilded each crested foam with its dazzling light, before she was aware that a stranger stood beside her. The scene was beautiful, awful, and sublime; and the two watchers forgot the danger in the emotions which its sublimity excited.

"Nancy," said the captain to the chambermaid, "did you see the lady who commanded silence when the ladies screamed, as the squall first struck the boat?"

"Yes," replied the servant; "and she looked more like an angel than a human being, with her head raised and her arms flung out, and her white dress, and her hair all falling over her shoulders."

"Well, I want you to point her out to me in the morning," returned the captain, with a smile at the sex's characteristic to notice the dress and appearance even in moments when vanity might be swallowed up in terror. A vivid flash of lightning lighted up the deck with a fearful brightness.

"There she is now!" exclaimed the maid.

"Where?" asked the captain, again turning to the priestess of neatness for his boat.

"There, by the window—she looks pretty now, but not so angel-like as she did."

"Pshaw!" returned the captain, "you never saw an angel." But he crossed to the other side of the boat to notice the heroine of the night more particularly.

A passenger, who stood near and heard the captain's and chambermaid's colloquy, had been watching Jessie's earnest gaze of enraptured admiration, and the expression of her speaking features, which plainly bespoke that the terrific beauty and sublimity of the scene had absorbed every emotion of fear. The successive flashes of lightning illumined her countenance, and revealed her attitude of graceful earnestness; her head slightly bent forward, the lips parted, and her hands clasped as if in profound adoration. The stranger followed the captain and paused beside the entranced girl.

"Glorious!" exclaimed Jessie, in a low unconscious murmur, as the fitful flashes lighted up the wide expanse of angry waters.

"And have you no fear, lady?" asked the stranger, in a tone of gentleness which contrasted strongly with the wild fury of the winds and the roar of the thunder. Low as was the tone, its gentle melody fell upon the ear of the excited girl, like music from a purer sphere.

"He," she replied, pointing upward, and unconsciously almost, using the language of the Psalmist, "commandeth and raiseth the winds which lift up the waves; and He can make the storm a calm, and the waves to be still."

"Your faith is lovely," commenced the stranger.

"Faith!" repeated Jessie, "I know not as it is faith. In sunshine and safety I might forget the power of God. But here, amid the contentions of the elements, where human aid cannot avail, I could not distrust His care or protection."

The fury of the storm continued to abate, and the thunder died away in the distance; but still the conversation continued between Jessie and the stranger. They had forgotten that they were strangers, that the lightning's flash alone had revealed to each the other's face and form. They had forgotten the frightened and paralyzed groups around them—they had even forgotten the storm, and themselves; for not a thought of danger or fatigue intruded upon their minds. And it is a question whether they even remembered the noble thoughts and poetic sentiments which they uttered. Two young persons, of opposite sexes, attracted towards each other by an irresistible sympathy, under circumstances less exciting and fearful, might have suffered such sympathy to degenerate into personal admiration. But they forgot, or rather a thought was not excited during their long communion, of human passions, nor the emotions of human love. It was a communion of congenial souls divested of the grossness of earthly feelings. Danger had impressed them with the consciousness of God's presence.

## CHAPTER VII.

DAYLIGHT appeared in the eastern horizon, and the passengers generally, relieved from the fearful apprehension which had kept them spell-bound during the darkness, began to feel the nauseating effects of the motion of the boat. Sea sickness and light aroused Mrs. Butler from the stupor which had benumbed her faculties, and at the suggestion of her husband, she rose to retire to the cabin, and became conscious of Jessie's absence.

"Where is Miss Jessie?" was her querulous inquiry.

Mr. Dwight had often thought the same,

during the long weary hours since she left his side. But Emma, weakened by terror and apprehension, had been obliged to accept the support which he had offered, and reclined in his arms, unable to sustain herself. As the storm lulled, she had sunk into an uneasy slumber, and fearful of disturbing her, he had impatiently awaited Jessie's return. All the others had been ignorant of her absence.

"I presume she has sought some more convenient place of repose, as she has been absent several hours," was his reply to Mrs. Butler's inquiry.

"Undoubtedly she is in the cabin," remarked Mr. Butler.

"Miss Magnum," continued Mrs. Butler, to Emma, who moved uneasily in her sleep, disturbed by the murmur of voices, "we will retire."

"How kind—how weary you must be," said Emma to Mr. Dwight, as she started from her recumbent posture, aroused to consciousness.

"Perhaps weary with watching," he replied, "but not in supporting you. Indeed, I was hardly aware," he continued, as he offered his arm, "that you reclined upon me." He said true, his thoughts had been with Jessie during the whole fearful watch.

"Where is—" commenced Emma.

"How improper!" said Mrs. Butler, abruptly pausing, as her argus eye caught the enthralled Jessie in earnest conversation with a stranger.

"Mr. Dwight," she continued, "oblige me by conducting Miss Graham to the cabin."

Emma took Mr. Butler's arm, and Mr. Dwight turned to execute Mrs. Butler's commission.

"Miss Graham," said he, addressing her, "Mrs. Butler desired me to conduct you to her: she is quite ill," he added, in an apologetic tone for the interruption.

"I had forgotten—" commenced Jessie, starting, as if awakening from slumber; and then, the thought what construction her hearers might put upon the admission she was about to utter, interrupted her sentence, and the warm blood of an ingenuous heart mantled her brow and neck. She blushed that the thought of what another might say, should cause her to fear to utter a simple truth.

"And I had forgotten," said the stranger, finishing her broken sentence, "that you had ceased to watch the storm, and I was detaining you from your friends—pardon me, lady."

"An unnecessary petition," returned Jessie, frankly; "and I have to thank you for exciting higher and nobler thoughts than I am wont to indulge."

"Rather thank the promptings of your own pure, firm spirit, lady," replied the



stranger. "One who can contemplate, in faith and trust, the wondrous majesty of the great Eternal in an hour of fearful peril, needs no monitor."

They bowed and parted; and Mr. Dwight conducted Jessie in silence to the cabin.

"Miss Graham," said Mrs. Butler, addressing the delinquent, from her berth, "you had better lie down; and pardon me for reminding you, that it is highly improper to enter into conversation with any indifferent person whom you may meet."

"Thank you," replied Jessie, and passed on to Emma, who also had sought her pillow.

"You are ill, Emma," said she, as she looked upon the pale countenance of her friend.

"Not ill," returned Emma; "only tired—sleep will restore me."

"Then I will not keep you from it," responded Jessie; "but it is strange that I feel no weariness."

It might be strange to her, but still it was nothing unnatural, and she lay for a long while after seeking her pillow in a waking dream.

As the storm had spent its fury in darkness, the passengers at daylight, weary with their watch, had generally sought their berths, and the captain considerably forbore to disturb their slumbers with the steward's "ting-ling"—"breakfast ready."

Jessie, perhaps, had been the last to close her eyes, and certainly was the first which-awoke. Oppressed by the confined air of the cabin, which, rendered impure by the breaths of so many persons, was offensive, she hastily rose, and without disturbing her servant, accepted the chambermaid's proffered assistance, and after her toilet, sought the upper deck.

The morning was as beautiful as the night had been terrific, and the sun sparkled on the undulating waves, which were slightly stirred by the fresh morning breeze. She paced the deck, which was entirely vacant, or gazed abstracted on the distant horizon. Or, perchance, paused and looked into the depths of the green waters beneath thinking of—Ah! who shall tell a maiden's thoughts! The reflections of a pure heart unhacknied in the world's wisdom, distrust, and selfishness, are sneered at, and flung aside with the opprobrious epithet—romance. In fact, in the present era, truth, purity, and an appreciation of the truly beautiful, are regarded as the indulgence of the most romantic imagination.

She had stood for some moments absorbed in watching the wake of the boat, when she was aroused from her reverie by a footfall near her, and in turning met the stranger of the preceding night. A blush suffused her cheek as she received his respectful but cordial salutation.

"Good morning," said he, "your countenance, without inquiry, tells me that you have not suffered by your fatigue last night."

She returned a fitting reply, and, as unconsciously as amid peril and darkness, forgot everything but the fascinating conversation of the stranger. And yet, it was not characterized by the same tone of lofty thought and noble sentiments, as when under the influence of the warfare of the elements. Insensibly, and perhaps unintentionally, they talked of themselves, of their opinions, and even of their feelings. They both seemed to have forgotten that twelve hours before they were as ignorant of each other's existences, as they still remained of each other's names.

Incidentally from the conversation, Jessie learned that her companion was traveling for his health, and drew the conclusion that it had been impaired by too close attention to his studies as a collegiate student; as he had mentioned having spent his youth in England, and graduated at the University of Oxford—and, also, that his parents, although English, resided in one of the West India Islands; perhaps, her native isle. But she did not mention this query of perhaps, as one of his previous remarks had secured him from the natural inquiry.

"I started for my tour through the United States," said he, "with the utmost reluctance, and only consented to it from my parents' special request. My mind was filled with prejudice, and I anticipated meeting every species of vulgarity and impertinence. But," he added, with a simplicity which made Jessie laugh, "it is three days since I landed at Norfolk, and I have not had a question asked me."

"The questions," returned Jessie, "are saved for your entrance into Yankee land."

"But I thought," continued the stranger, "any part of the United States was honored with the cognomen of 'Yankee land.' But," he added, gallantly, "perhaps I have been more than usually favored by my introduction to your country—you are the first and only lady I have spoken with."

"Your remark proves that you have been a student of Hall, Fidler, and Trollop," returned Jessie, "and at the expense of my country's honor, I will venture the query whether you have gained a professorship in the college of gallant compliments, as well as a degree at Oxford?"

"My candor and sincerity are not wont to be doubted by those who know me," gravely replied the stranger.

This train of remark was not pursued, but after it, Jessie would not have asked a serious question, if she had supposed him her fiftieth cousin instead of being only an inhabitant of the little sunny isle where she first drew breath.

In the course of the conversation, she also learned that the stranger had landed at Norfolk, instead of the usual ports of disembarkation farther north, to secure the company of a young American gentleman, who had been spending the winter months in the West Indies for the benefit of the salubrious climate, and who was anxious to visit his friends in the southern part of Virginia, before returning to his more northern home. And as an opportunity for immediate passage to Norfolk had offered, he embraced it to secure the companionship of his friend, although he had intended to make the tour of the northern and western states first.

And here, because the movements of our *dramatis personae* suggest it, we are half-disposed to offer some hints to valetudinarians upon the subject of climates. And as we ask no fee from the patient, nor honor from the faculty for our opinions, we are aware that they will be treated like the old lady's panacea of simples—good-for-nothing.

But to send pulmonary patients south to an enervating climate, where the very air is laden with lassitude, seems to us the very contra-distinction from common-sense.

When the lungs have become diseased, the whole system must necessarily be weakened, and needs strengthening instead of debilitating; and as we believe it is an incontrovertible fact that a tropical climate enervates a healthy person accustomed to the more bracing air of a northern one, we cannot understand the logic which recommends it to an invalid.

"But," says the caviller, "many consumptive patients have received benefit from a voyage south—"

True, *the voyage* may do them good; also change of habits may be beneficial; and faith and awakened hope may effect wonders. But still we doubt the benefit of the residence; unless it may cause them to dare to breathe the pure air, and take off the bandages and mufflers from over the mouth.

In sense and necessity, there can be no excuse for tying up the face, except the toothache. And with that a man is excusable in doing many unreasonable things.

As some one wiser than we are has said, "put your comforters," mufflers, and shawls "on your feet," if you please; but in mercy to your lungs, let them occasionally inhale a little pure oxygen, and the colder, we had almost said, the better. And perhaps so, above the freezing point.

If the lungs are irritated, take something to allay the irritation, but do not increase it by compelling them to inhale only heated and impure air. *What! you can't breathe cold air?* Well, if you had kept your eyes bandaged and yourself in total darkness

for months and perhaps years, do you think you could instantaneously pass from darkness to the glare of the noonday sun, and see much!

It is a law of nature that *exercise* gives strength and power to the different organs and functions of the human system. And exercise of the lungs means something more than just breathing because you can't stop.

Talk, laugh, sing, dance, jump, and even run up hill, if you cannot produce a good, hearty, vulgar, panting, bellows-like puff otherwise. And to do this with any degree of spirit or comfort, requires a *very cool atmosphere*.

But to vacate our assumed dignity of the M. D. G.

Although others of the passengers joined Jessie and the stranger on the promenade-deck, yet it did not interrupt their conversation; and they were as oblivious of the whole world, as of those who surrounded them.

Mr. Dwight had been pacing the deck with strides not in unison with his usual placid demeanor, more than an hour; but Jessie had not noticed his presence, and without Mrs. Butler's sanction or request he did not deem himself authorized to interrupt a *tête-à-tête* apparently so agreeable to the parties engaged. At last, excited to almost irritation by seeing a stranger, or rather an acquaintance of hours, win more earnest attention than he had been enabled to do by the devotion of months; and aware that he should not militate against a proper family arrangement by the interruption, he was on the point of seeking Mr. Butler, knowing that gentleman was too loyal an ally of his excellent lady, not to devise means to put a stop to such gross impropriety, as a lady's treating a gentleman as if he was a human being, without asking who his father was, and whether his maternal parent had authorized his present journey from the protection of the paternal roof—when the sable-headed messenger announced the important news of "breakfast!" "ting-ling!" "breakfast!" What an indispensable item in the everyday duties, is the sacrifice of a piece of bread and butter to the stomach deities!

Mr. Dwight, instead of proceeding for Mr. Butler, came forward and presented his arm to Jessie with a graveness of manner which would have been highly becoming to a judge pronouncing the sentence of death upon a culprit, and turned from the stranger with a haughty chilling air, which, according to our theory, would have been highly beneficial, provided he had been afflicted with any pulmonary complaint.

Both his gravity and reserve were lost by those upon whom it was bestowed, as they were busily wondering where the

last two or three hours had flown, as when the sonorous announcement of breakfast had aroused them, they both had caught the remark of a grumbler near by that "eleven o'clock was nearer dinner than breakfast."

Mrs. Butler and Emma had but just arisen, and thanks to the length of their slumber, were quite recovered from both sickness and fatigue. But as Jessie did not join them until they were taking their seats at the table, there was no opportunity of an inquiry where or how she had spent the morning.

After breakfast they all adjourned to the upper deck, as beneath its ample awning it was much more pleasant than in the cabin.

As they were nearly the first upon deck, they had the choice of seats, and Mr. Dwight exhibited more than his usual tact in arranging them. Jessie and Emma were placed upon the bench or fixed seat next to the railing, and himself and Mr. and Mrs. Butler were arranged in a semi-circle in front, so as to preclude all approach from those disposed to steal or embezzle the treasure of the young ladies' society.

Now that danger was passed, the party was gay and quite merry with anticipations and hoped-for pleasures. A pause occasioned by a missing handkerchief, and a servant dispatched in quest of it, was broken by Mr. Dwight's observing,

"I trust you were agreeably entertained this morning, Miss Graham."

"Very much so," frankly replied Jessie.

"I hope you have not been forming any new accidental acquaintances," commenced Mrs. Butler, "it would be highly improper, and we have no friends on board."

"No new one," returned Jessie, "only prosecuting one already commenced."

"Miss Graham, as your guardian," commenced Mr. Butler, slightly emphasizing guardian, "I must beg you not to form acquaintances without an introduction. I will at all times, and with much pleasure, procure you introductions, if I cannot give them, to any person you desire, provided I see no impropriety in the acquaintance."

"I don't know," responded Jessie pettishly, vexed at Mr. Butler's implied censure, "what impropriety there can be in reading a page from an interesting book, even if I do pick it up on a public table, and it has not passed the ordeal of your criticism, my dear sir."

"And did the beauty and elegance of the binding lend any interest to the pages of your book?" asked Mr. Dwight, sarcastically.

Jessie raised her eyes to reply, and caught those of the stranger: and as he turned abruptly from the spot, she first noticed his superior and marked personal

beauty. The mingled expression of his countenance she could not define. Was it scorn or wounded pride? As she did not reply to Mr. Dwight's query, the subject was dropped. But she was so carefully *guarded* the few remaining hours they passed on the boat, that the stranger could not have spoken with her, unless he came armed with a regular certified introduction to the protector in general, and the minister of proprieties, even if he had wished.

And there was no manifestation that he desired to unfold another page of the volume of his heart or mind.

As they were leaving the boat, he bowed with graceful ease and nonchalance to Jessie, and thus ended her first lesson in flirtation. And did she feel the same zest for a surfeit, as when she left home but four days before? In truth, we cannot tell. The mysteries of a maiden's heart we never unraveled.

## CHAPTER VIII.

'MASTER TOM,' whom we would now introduce to the reader as Thomas Carlton, Esq., had finished his legal studies and passed his examination with credit both to his natural powers and his attainments. He had studied with an object, personal independence, and his researches were far in advance of many who had practised at the bar for years.

The gentleman with whom he had pursued his studies, now a distinguished and honored statesman and politician, aware of his student's rare legal abilities, had, on his admittance to the bar, proffered him a partnership in his own practice, an offer which the young man had most gratefully accepted.

But unaccustomed to so severe application without relaxation, his physical system was worn and weakened. And about eight months previous to the commencement of our narrative (Jessie's departure for the northern tour), he had departed to spend the ensuing winter in the West Indies. Business had been the ostensible motive assigned for his journey, and served as an apology to Mr. Burton for his choice of the Indian Isles for the scene of his relaxation instead of his Virginia home.

Furnished with letters and every *cetera* to render his stay pleasant in the place of his intended sojourn, he sailed from New York, and, after an agreeable and delightful voyage, reached his destination. His letters to his banker, as well as those of introduction, were all duly honored, and he soon found himself more actively engaged in courts of gallant *devoirs* than in those of legal doubts, although the

business of the latter was not neglected. And his noble dignity and high sense of honor won the respect of his own sex, in an equal degree that his chivalrous urbanity and elegant person did the countenance and admiration of the ladies.

"Mr. Carlton," said a young gentleman, entering his room one morning, a few weeks after his arrival, "I have a claim upon your everlasting gratitude."

"It is a claim, Mr. Stanley," returned Carlton, "which I shall acknowledge with the utmost pleasure."

"Hold!" responded Stanley, "you cannot acknowledge its worth until you appreciate my self-denial, and see the peerless gem which I stand less chance of obtaining after exhibiting your irresistible self in the light of its magic rays."

"In plain prose," returned Carlton, with a smile, "am I to understand that I am to be honored with an introduction to your lady-love? as none but lovers ever get beyond the comparisons of 'splendid,' 'amiable,' and 'lovely.'"

"Yes, she is my lady-love, if devotion such as devotees pay at the shrine of their patron saint, could invest me with the right. I worship her as a germ of all that is lovely and excellent in woman, and I love her," he continued, with a smile, "as a *cousin*."

"And I suspect," replied Carlton, "have hopes of claiming a nearer relationship?"

"No, on my honor, I have no such hopes; and—you will be surprised—but I have no such desires."

"And does that explain why I am to be permitted the honor of an introduction?" asked Carlton, with a quiet smile.

"Oh, the base ingratitude of this distrusting world!" exclaimed Stanley, in mock tragic. "Here I come, prompted by the pure benevolence of humanity, and offer you an introduction to the loveliest woman on the island, if not in the world; and you coolly turn round and ask, if it is because I do not want to change her into a hum-drum Mrs. Stanley with nine small children, that I expose my peerless paragon to the charm of your fascinations. Oh, the base ingratitude! But, as Aunt Betty says, '*I knew it would be so.*'"

"But you have not told me the name of this divinity," said Carlton.

"*This divinity!*" repeated Stanley. "Just as though there could be a *that* divinity also. The divine Isabella Belmont has no compeer."

"Is she old, ugly, crooked, or yellow?" asked Carlton, aware of his companion's love of mischief, and that it was quite as probable the lady was the opposite of all he represented her.

"Profanation!" exclaimed Stanley. "Old!—is the sun less dazzling and brilliant, because it has seen many years?"

Ugly!—do poets think the moon, with its pale yellow light, less lovely and beautiful, because it has spots upon it? Crooked and yellow!—is not yellow one of the *iris* hues of the arch of promise? and is not that bow, as it spans the heavens with its glorious beauty, nearly bent double?"

"After such ingenious, incontrovertible arguments, I shall never presume to dispute the right of the divine Isabella Belmont to all the beauty of age and ugliness, curves and sallowness."

"I'll remember your declaration and remind you of it, when in despair you have concluded to drown yourself for love of angelic cousin Bel," returned the young man, laughing.

"But when shall I see this angel of age?" asked Carlton.

"To-night, if you will," was the reply. "Cousin Fred has returned from the classic domes of Oxford—dismissed, I believe—and, in honor of the event, there is to be a splendid party at the villa, where the divine cousin Bel will shine in all the glory of—her charms. There's your invitation," he added, flinging a card upon the table—"I bribed the servant to let me bring it, that I might earn your everlasting gratitude—adieu, until we meet in Bel's presence." And the young man was gone before Carlton could express thanks or reply.

He took up the card, and saw that it was an invitation to the residence of one of the most highly distinguished and wealthy gentlemen on the island. He had heard Mr. Belmont named with praise and respect from every source; but as his residence was a few miles from the city, he had not, as yet, been honored with an introduction to him, and very naturally concluded that he was indebted to Frank Stanley (as he was) for the invitation.

As a note accompanied the card, with sufficient apology and cause for Mr. Belmont's not calling in person with the invitation, Carlton felt that it would be rudeness to reject the proffered hospitality, although he had intended to devote that evening to an indispensable duty to the absent—writing letters.

At the appointed hour his cabriolet set him down at Mr. Belmont's mansion. The house was surrounded by most elegant grounds, where classic taste had improved rather than pruned the ideal of nature. Tasteful walks, overshadowed with the magnificent shrubbery of tropical climes, intermingled with the flowering plants, to set off the rich beauty of the scene as diamonds are combined with dark, lustrous hair to relieve the too striking contrast of the alabaster brow.

The splendid magnolia, and the sweet-scented orange, with its bright flowers, dark leaves, and golden fruit, mingled with

the lemon and the oppressive perfume of the china to load the air with their varied fragrance. And the brilliancy of the heavens adding its own diamond light, made the gorgeousness of the scene a reality never before supposed by Carlton to exist, but in the brain of some ancient Arabian poet.

The house was low and extensive, embosomed securely within a lovely dell from the terrific tornados which at times swept with violence over the island; and its low site, with the rising undulating outline of the horizon, but added beauty to the situation.

A servant conducted Carlton from his carriage to the door, where another preceded him through a long spacious hall to a suit of rooms in the form of a semicircle, which surrounded the one side of a circular flower garden. In the centre of the garden there was a fountain, tempering the sultriness of the atmosphere with play of its clear, sparkling waters. The *jet d'eau* of the fountain was of lead, but the clever taste of an artist had ingeniously constructed it so as to produce a most happy effect. It represented a large tree stripped of its foliage, and from each of its thousand branches the waters leaped merrily into a marble reservoir below. And as the waters sparkled beneath the brilliant moonlight, in appearance it resembled a native of a northern forest, covered with icicles glittering in a winter's sun. The illusion or imitation was so perfect that one could not well look upon it, without feeling himself transported for the instant into a frozen region. The whole suite of apartments on this side of the house was thrown into one grand saloon, which, when Carlton arrived, was nearly filled with company.

As soon as his name was announced, Frank Stanley came forward and conducted him to the master and mistress of the mansion, from whom he received a kind and gracious reception.

Mr. Belmont was an English gentleman of near sixty years of age, and still in hale and vigorous manhood, although, perhaps, his countenance was not quite as florid as that of some of his countrymen who had never left the humid atmosphere of their own native, foggy isle. His manner was both courteous and dignified, and it was evident, that in his younger days there were but few superior to him in personal attractions.

Mrs. Belmont was fifteen or twenty years her husband's junior, and still in possession of remarkable beauty. Her form was of perfect symmetry, and her complexion dazzlingly fair; blue eyes and golden hair which harmonized with the delicate blending of her color; and hands and feet which were models of

aristocratic delicateness. In her countenance was the mingled expression of gentleness and benevolence, united with all the softer and more delicate sensibilities of her sex. A stranger would have judged her under thirty years of age; and if there was a fault about her, in manner, feature, or expression, it was the fault of being too perfect.

"Can this be Isabella Belmont, whom Stanley almost led me to believe old and ugly?" was Carlton's mental query upon his introduction. Of Mr. Belmont's family he knew nothing. He had heard Mr. Belmont mentioned many times, but no remark whether he was wedded or single, a widower, or still in the possession of "heaven's best gift." And he immediately decided that this was Miss Belmont, and he had misunderstood his introduction.

After a few moments' conversation with his host and hostess, Stanley again appeared.

"With your leave," said he, bowing to Mr. and Mrs. Belmont, "I will act as master of ceremonies in some of Mr. Carlton's introductions."

"I will only detain Mr. Carlton to say," replied Mr. Belmont, "that he must not believe all that my romancing but honorable nephew, Mr. Frank Stanley, may tell him, for he will learn more licensed poetic delusions than real facts."

"Ingratitude and injustice assail me on every side," returned Stanley, as he led the way for Carlton to follow.

"How do you like my peerless aunt?" he asked, after they had passed beyond the hearing of the lady.

"Your aunt!" repeated Carlton.

"To be sure; you gazed earnestly enough at her to have formed an opinion."

"Was that lady your aunt? I suppose her your cousin," returned Carlton.

"The divine Bel," said Stanley, with a hearty laugh. "Why, did you not hear? I named Mr. and Mrs. Belmont."

"But you know your romancing propensities," continued Carlton, "and the conversion of a Miss into a Mrs. would be an innocent one, as the lady is certainly old enough to be entitled to the appellation."

"Sir, do you wear a sword?" asked Stanley, gravely, stepping back.

"Not to use upon friends," replied Carlton, with a smile.

"Do you know that I am a lieutenant in her most gracious majesty's service?" continued Stanley, with a still more grave demeanor.

"Then the histrionic corps have lost a better, where her majesty's has only obtained a good," returned Carlton, laughing at the tragic, or, as Frank called it, "the dagger tone."

"Confound you! you think I am quizzing," continued Stanley.

"Of course, you would do nothing else with that subject here," returned Carlton, in a quiet tone.

"But we are nearing the shrine of the divinity of my worship, and I have a presentiment that your sacrifice will be accepted, and mine rejected: and I want to find some excuse to put you out of the way by quietly bleeding you in the morning."

"If you would defer the matter a week, it would particularly oblige me," returned Carlton, smiling. For it did not require a very long acquaintance to understand Lieutenant Stanley's character. Frank, high-spirited, and generous to a fault; a courted favorite for his good nature and humor, as well as for his more sterling qualities; yet it were a question, whether for five consecutive minutes he could have spoken seriously upon any subject, except in cases of suffering or danger to another person.

"Lovely queen of the night," she commenced, addressing a most beautiful girl of seventeen or eighteen years of age.

"Shall I help you, coz?" she interrupted. "Let the next line be—Thou pale orb, most stupidly bright—"

"There is no doing anything with you in a poetic manner," he returned, with assumed vexation. "But allow me to present at the feet of your majesty, my friend, Mr. Carlton of New York; Mr. Carlton, Miss Belmont—my divine Cousin Bel."

If Carlton was somewhat embarrassed by the vision of loveliness to which he was thus whimsically presented, she was equally so by his startled gaze of admiration. Their slight confusion was food for Stanley, and as soon as the salutations were passed, he looked at Carlton with a comical serious expression, and said—

"Aunt Betty knows—I told you it would be so." And then turning to Bel—"As a loyal subject it is my duty to inform your majesty that Mr. Carlton has maligned your majesty's fair fame. He asked, noble lady, if you were old, ugly, crooked, and yellow."

"My fair fame could never be tarnished, nor want a defender where my noble Cousin Frank was present," returned the lady.

"He has presumed to fall in love with your noble lady-mother," pursued the accuser, "instead of—"

"An act which, with my heart and eyes, I do not well see how he could avoid," quickly interrupted the lady.

"He has refused to fight me—"

"He has my thanks for leaving something for my lapdog to do."

"Ungrateful!" exclaimed Stanley. But quickly resuming his accusing tone, he continued, "But he presumes to stand in your august presence."

"Because," returned the lady, "you have not permitted me to ask him to be seated." And with a graceful inclination of her head, she motioned Carlton to a seat beside her.

"I told you it would be so," exclaimed Stanley, in a mock tone of grief, as he pursued his way into the veranda.

Isabella Belmont possessed the combined beauty of both parents. She had the fair and delicate complexion of her mother, the brilliant black eyes of her father, and hair like his of a dark brown hue. The expression of her countenance was like the proud dignity of the father softened by a gentle archness, or like her mother's gentleness, animated by a charming vivacity; and accustomed from her childhood to have all behests of her kindly heart obeyed, there was a faint tinge of majesty or command in her manner. To sum the whole up in a few words, Isabella Belmont was one of nature's happiest specimens of what woman should be. She was truly queen of the night, for although Stanley had not communicated the fact to Carlton, the party was as much in honor of her return, as that of her brother.

She, also, had been sent to England to finish her education, and the season previous, under the protection of her mother's sister, had made her debut in the fashionable circles of London, where her beauty, and perchance the reputed immense wealth of her father, had created quite a sensation. But thinking more of present enjoyment than of conjugal bliss, and perhaps satiated by the fulsome adulation which followed her, she unhesitatingly rejected several overtures for her approbation, and retained her heart in her own keeping.

Frank Stanley had been intimate with his young cousin in England the two years she resided there, before his regiment was ordered to the West Indies. He then loved her as a cousin, and if the thought of a more ardent attachment ever entered his giddy brain, he wisely kept it there; for with all his faults, he was too proud to have solicited the hand of a beautiful heiress, as Lieutenant Stanley, with nothing but his commission and sword.

"My rose-bud Bel," he would sometimes say, "what a pity that you are not old and ugly, for then, out of the pure benevolence of my soul, I should marry you. And your noble father could do no less to reward my disinterestedness, than divide his ample possessions between Fred and me."

"Most probably, in such a case, your benevolence would evaporate in a 'poor Cousin Bel,'" she would return laughingly.

As soon as Stanley had turned from Carlton and Isabella,

"I trust," said she, "you are aware that Lieutenant Stanley is a privileged person."

"I envy him his freedom of thought and expression," returned Carlton. "He can approach with impunity where others, less happy, must worship in the distance."

"Miss Belmont," said an old lady, who approached them, "pardon me, if I am rude in my interruption; but I must seize the first moment to say how happy I am to see your sunny face again. Am I forgotten?"

"Mrs. Lacey's kindness is too indelibly impressed upon my memory to be ever forgotten," replied Isabella, rising and kissing the cheek of her venerable friend.

"I knew that Isabella Belmont's heart never could change," returned the old lady, her voice tremulous from emotion, "but I feared my person might be forgotten. I would not permit your dear mother to come with me in search of you, as I wished to test your memory. The young forget the aged—"

"But I never could forget you," returned Isabella, seating her aged friend upon the couch from which she had risen. Then kneeling upon a low ottoman at Mrs. Lacey's feet, she looked up into her face with an arch smile.

"No, no," said the old lady, smiling; "I shall not tell you a story now, if you do petition as of old—I want to talk of the real—"

"But were not all your stories real?" asked Isabella, with a grave look of surprise. "I believed them all veritable history, even the 'cows jumping over the moon,' and Cinderella with her two naughty sisters."

Mrs. Lacey smiled at the tenacious memory of her favorite; and then an expression of chastened sorrow for an instant dimmed the cheerfulness of her countenance: the thought of the bright and glad some youth of her own children—of the laughing voices of those children's children. All were laid low. Not one branch was left to shelter with its green foliage her leafless and widowed age. With intuitive perception, Isabella divined the thoughts of her bereaved friend, and bowed her head and imprinted a kiss of silent sympathy upon the hand which was clasped within her own.

And then rising to relieve or change the emotions of her venerable friend, she continued, "Pardon me, in my joy at seeing you—I forgot—Mrs. Lacey, permit me to introduce Mr. Carlton of New York."

Carlton rose and bowed respectfully.

"Mr. Carlton," she continued, "Mrs. Lacey of Lacey Grove." And then turning to Mrs. Lacey, she added, "If we may believe Lieutenant Stanley—"

"Mrs. Lacey, your humble servant," interrupted Stanley, approaching; "and per-

mit me to assure you that you may believe Lieutenant Stanley upon all occasions," he continued, mimicking Isabella's manner.

"What," returned Mrs. Lacey, "shall I believe you when you told me that our dear Bel had grown homely, awkward, and squinted horribly?"

"Madam," answered Stanley, bowing, "I said I wished Bel had grown homely, awkward, and squinted horribly—the 'I wished' was prefixed mentally."

The trio could not forbear a smile at Lieutenant Stanley's ingenious defence of his veracity, but before they could make any comment—

"Fred," he continued, abruptly addressing a young gentleman who was passing. The gentleman approached. "Mr. Carlton," continued Stanley, "Mr. Frederick Belmont, a young gentleman lately dismissed from Oxford, and whom all these good people are bid to congratulate on the happy occasion."

"Mr. Belmont, Mr. Carlton of New York," continued Stanley, "a gentleman who must remove your unfounded prejudices against his countrymen."

"An American gentleman," replied young Belmont, slightly emphasizing the word, "I can honor as much as any other. Mr. Carlton must receive Lieutenant Stanley's implications with due reservation, as he acknowledges to many mental explanations.—Ladies," he continued, addressing his sister and Mrs. Lacey, "will you pardon me, if I deprive you of Mr. Carlton's agreeable society?" And without waiting for an answer, he took Carlton's arm, and led him into the gardens.

Frederick Belmont was the manly counterpart of his sister. He was in temperament in a degree more grave, but he was kindly, affectionate, generous, brave, and noble-minded. He was not as tall as his father, but yet not below the medium average of men. He also had his father's dark eyes, and had inherited from the same parent a less fair complexion than his sister. But the features were the same. And upon a more noble youth and lovely maiden the sun never shone. They were worthy, in every respect, of their parentage, and more could not be said.

The young men strayed through the cool perfumed walks, conversing upon different topics, until they reached a retired arbor, where unconsciously they seated themselves, and perhaps for the moment forgot the gay scene within.

"I have a prejudice against your country," said Belmont, in continuation of some remarks which had been made in reference to Stanley's implied accusation. "Not," said he, "of their educated men of that class which have the will to correct the minor evils that necessarily arise from the mass assuming the position of power."

The ignorant of every country are tainted with vulgarisms—and the mass, the laboring community, are by the necessity of their position ignorant. They have no time to acquire knowledge. And yet, this class, the most numerous everywhere, rule your country through the ballot-box. Consequently my prejudice arises from the position, that where ignorance and its attendant evils take the precedence, mankind must retrograde, instead of advancing in civilization."

"You argue from the false premises, that the mass cannot be elevated," returned Carlton. "Government, by recognizing every man's equality as designed by his Creator, instead of elevating the superior, elevates the inferior classes. And in my country, where even the humblest laborer's son, if gifted with genius and talent and directed by honorable motives, may aspire to even the highest position among his countrymen, the mass, of which you have so much horror, are elevated by self respect and seek to be worthy of the honor of the highest.—Truth," he continued, "should be the incentive of all actions—but emulation is a stronger power to the aspiring. And when honor is not to the best, but the greatest—where the rich and the poor start from common ground, the reward is as likely to be secured by the latter as the former—He has necessity as well as ambition to spur him forward—"

"Fred! Fred! where the d——l are you!" was heard in Stanley's voice coming down the walk. The young men emerged from the shade of the arbor, and Stanley's eye caught them.

"Are you not going to open the dancing-room to-night?" commenced Stanley. "Here, I have been suffering martyrdom in playing the agreeable to sixteen old maids, and seventeen respectable elderly ladies, whom your gracious mother saw proper to invite because they owed their existence or names to honorable men; while you have been stealing off to give Carlton a Greek lecture to show your acquirements and elocution. I say, Fred, this is too bad—if you will have a tremendous fuss because you have left Oxford, help entertain the dullards who are bid to the show. Open the dancing-room, give me some music, and an excuse to say soft things to some pretty girl." And he paused, out of breath.

"Is your eloquence exhausted, or your lungs!" asked Belmont.

"Lungs and patience!" returned Stanley. "I'll shoot you next, if you don't help me. Because I can't help saying civil things to anything in the shape of a petticoat, and have said 'poor puss' to every old lady's cat in the island, they all expect my most devoted attention, even when I fain would be excused."

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"Which, the ladies or the cats?" asked Carlton.

"Faith, both: and I wish my good aunt had invited all the ancient dames' favorites to amuse them."

"She did, brave cousin," responded Belmont, laughing; "Lieutenant Stanley of the ninety-eighth regiment was specially invited for—"

"Oh, the base ingratitude of this wicked world!" exclaimed Stanley. "But come along, Fred—you shall do duty also, and dance with Miss Felicia Amelia Josephine Scrubbs—it will be a striking contrast."

Carlton and Belmont accompanied Stanley into the saloon.

"In such large parties," said Belmont, "one can, with impunity, seek relief, for a few moments, from false glitter and false compliments. If you are missed in one place, they must suppose you occupied in another, where there are equal claims."

The dancing-room was a low summer-house, which was entered from the suite of rooms now occupied by the company, through a short hall or gallery. The sides of the building were enclosed only by the twinings of a luxuriant creeping plant, which embraced the pillars that supported the roof.

In the front of this building or room, now fitted up for the ball-room, was the fountain with its sparkling waters issuing from its many mouths, and tempering the warm atmosphere with a delicious coolness.

"As our stranger-guest," said Mr. Belmont to Carlton, "you will open the ball with my daughter."

"I told you it would be so," said Stanley to Carlton, in a low tone, as the latter conducted Isabella across the room.

The dancing of Isabella Belmont was in unison with everything pertaining to her perfection. And when Carlton listened to her sprightly conversation, and gazed upon the speaking beauties of her face and person, who will be surprised that he, without the cool calculation of worldly wisdom, which asks an equivalent for all it gives, surrendered his heart's, nay his very soul's adoration!

## CHAPTER IX.

AFTER Carlton was free from the intoxicating presence of Isabella, he felt that the indulgence of the emotions which her beauty and grace had excited, was madness.

"As a poor lawyer who has not only fame, but a living to acquire, I can never aspire to the hand of Mr. Belmont's daughter," said he mentally, as he tried to summon what little cool sense he had left, to



his aid. But it was of no use; Isabella Belmont in all her loveliness peeped upon the other and the brighter side of his mental vision.

"I won't be a fool," he continued, as he turned on his couch, and sought to dispel the vividness of the lovely image, by shutting his eyes. But it was of no use; the dim twilight of his chamber excluded from his physical vision, only rendered the mental more distinct. The strains of exciting music, and the brilliantly lighted rooms, with the image of the beautiful girl, still haunted his heated fancy.

"Will is superior to passion," said he, more resolutely, "and the one shall not master the other," and he flung off his musquito-bar, and rose and paced the room the little hour of remaining darkness.

At daylight he sought his couch again, and as nature was wearied, sank to sleep, and dreams took the place of waking visions.

"Lieutenant Stanley sends his compliments, and wants, if you be dead, you'd send him word, massa," said a negro servant, knocking at his door late the next morning.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Stanley, who had followed close upon the negro's heels, "you have delivered the message better than I could myself, Sambo; you shall hereafter be my messenger extraordinary on all special occasions. Go, my sable wit," he continued, "you have roused the king of seven sleepers."

"Carlton," pursued Stanley, as he entered the anteroom to Carlton's sleeping apartment, "if you be dead, speak, man."

"You and Sambo," returned Carlton, as he issued from the inner room, "would wake Morpheus himself."

"Why," continued Stanley, "I anticipated finding you up penning a sonnet to divine Bel's divine nose, and—"

"Pshaw!" interrupted Carlton.

"You are the first man, Carlton," continued the rattling Stanley, "who ever cried 'psaw!' to Bel Belmont. I'll duly inform her of the fact; for, satiated as she must be with worship, there must be something piquant to hear that her charms were mentioned with a contemptuous 'psaw!'"

"The impatient ejaculation was excited by the cousin, instead of the lady," returned Carlton.

"Worse," commenced Stanley, but he was interrupted by the entrance of young Belmont.

"You will not think me officious," said Belmont, addressing Carlton, after the usual salutations, "but I, in your name, have promised my old friend, Mrs. Lacey, that you should dine with her this evening—you will not refuse to fulfill the contract, will you?"

"After your promise, I could not refuse the hospitality of a lady who won my highest esteem the moment I saw her," returned Carlton.

"Highest esteem for old Mrs. Lacey!" exclaimed Stanley, "fell in love with my aunt! faith, my cool young friend, I'll sign over my interest in all the ancient ladies in the island to you, and cry joy at the quittance."

"Will their cats be included in the contract?" asked Carlton, with a quiet smile.

"Oh, the base ingratitude of the world! to remind me my scape-grace cousin intimated that his lady-mother invited me to supply the place of their feline favorites. But adieu: I go to tell the divine Bel of your 'psaw!'" exclaimed Stanley, departing as abruptly as he had entered.

After Stanley's departure the young men's conversation insensibly became graver, and they were soon discussing with a serious earnestness, which would have become legislators (if legislators could forget the petty schemes of party politicians), questions of government and political economy.

Frederick Belmont, like most young men, had a high opinion of his own sagacity in reading character. He thought his own judgment nearly infallible. And the evening before, when Carlton was introduced to him as a gentleman from New York, a citizen from the country where his prejudice pictured the inhabitants as but a few degrees removed from the semi-barbarous—the men but little better than boors, with the exception of the favored few, who had had the opportunity of acquiring gentlemanly habits and manners from foreign countries—and the women fit companions for their vulgar lords and masters; he was anxious to cultivate his acquaintance and prove the truth or fallacy of his own opinions. For Frederick Belmont, with all his prejudice, was candid, and meant to be just.

That an intelligent Englishman should harbor such sentiments respecting American character, within the last ten or fifteen years, may strike the reader as an overwrought picture. But we regret it is a common one. We do not refer merely to the journalists, who have sought to make a saleable book by catering to the tastes of their countrymen (although that such compilations of facts and fancy meet with ready sale, is a proof of the distorted prejudice, which sees from the wrong end of the telescope), but to our own knowledge of the private opinions of those whom we should have deemed too noble and generous not to allow their neighbors the same freedom of character which they claimed in their own national birthright. But an Englishman's prejudice, in a national point of view, is equalled only by his self-ag

grandizement and egotism. To see an Englishman exercising modesty and humility in his national character, would, I ween, be a phenomenon on this little globular earth of ours. Of private character, we do not speak. In every land upon which the universal sun shines, may be found individuals animated by the purest motives, and exercising the noblest virtues. And in no country more than in the Albion Isle.

But in national arrogance, haughty, overbearing, insolent pride, and assumption of superiority, the English, as a nation, are without equals. And they are so inflated with their own importance, they forget it enhances the nobleness of even national character, to wear honors meekly — and that to boast will tarnish the brilliancy of the brightest virtues.

But England—God bless it; “and may its shadow never be less.”

“And America?”

Tut! the Americans obscure the brightness of their national glory, by an overweening, sensitive, womanish vanity. Not the polite, fanciful, vivacious vanity of the French character; but a kind of John Bull vainglory, which boasts of itself, and claims praiseworthiness for even its blunders; and is not content with its own comfortable opinion, but is annoyed if every other person does not also adopt it.

A real John Bull is superior to the imperfections of humanity—is never in fault nationally. An American is not quite so positive of the infallibility of all the measures of his dearly beloved country, of which he is a component and essential part; but he will prove, or at least argue, that even the blunders were the very best measures which could have been adopted under the existing circumstances.

Belmont's prejudice vanished before Carlton's frank and gentlemanly manner, but still in his own mind, he allowed the exception from vulgarity to the individual, not the nation. Some remark of his made Carlton suspect the truth.

“It is said, you know,” said Carlton, in reply to the remark, “that ‘it is distance which lends enchantment to the view,’ and truly it is distance which aids to distort opinions and found prejudice. You remember the fable of the man who in a foggy morning descried a monster upon an opposite hill, and in descending into the valley he met it, and discovered it to be his own brother. Come,” he continued, “make a tour of the United States; it will correct any errors which you may have imbibed of the deteriorating influence of our institutions, more than any testimony of an interested individual like myself.”

Belmont shook his head, with a doubtful smile.

“Undoubtedly,” pursued Carlton, “you will meet with many habits and peculiarities annoying, and, perchance, disgusting. But where would you not? Even in happy England, I imagine a stranger might meet the same. And yet, I presume, I should be unjust in declaring that they arose from the government of the country. Let me say, that in the nineteenth century no nation is so civilized and refined, that its legislators or rulers prescribe the manners and dress. Even in despotic Turkey, the supreme law and will of the nation has found itself defied by old customs and habits; and if Sultan Mahmoud had to proceed with great caution and prudence in attacking the beards of his slave-subjects, it is unreasonable to anticipate that the Congress of a free nation can prescribe the manner in which its inhabitants shall expectorate!”

“You are making my opinions ridiculous,” returned Belmont, laughing; “we will leave the politeness of your countrymen, and go and discuss Mrs. Lacey's dinner. But remember, if I do visit the United States, I shall claim to exercise my own judgment upon the tendency of your institutions.”

“That privilege you shall have with all freedom,” responded Carlton, “but don't fall into the ridiculous logic which some of your countrymen have adopted—namely, that Americans spit; hence, republican institutions produce the vulgar habit of spitting.”

“You have attacked the strong hold of my prejudices,” returned Belmont, laughing heartily, “and I shall have to hand you over to my sister and Stanley.”

On arriving at Mrs. Lacey's, Carlton was delighted to find that the lovely Isabella made one of the little party met to discuss the merit of the kind old lady's turtle-soup. And truth compels us to add, that none refused to do full justice to the rich viands which graced the table.

To see a lover eat in the presence of his mistress and not swallow his plate instead of the meat, exhibits something nearer of earth than heaven; and to see a very beautiful girl eat at all, gives one the idea of angels feeding on pudding and milk. But our friends are treated very like turkeys; if we have one particularly nice, we wish to see it grace our dinner-table.

“How long since you heard from our Jessie?” asked Isabella of Mrs. Lacey, after dinner.

“It is several months,” replied Mrs. Lacey, “and I fear my saucy pet has taken umbrage at my reply. I am sure, I only intended to clip the wings of the dear girl's imagination, and not let it fly away with her happiness.”

"I am certain," returned Isabella, "that you would not blame without cause; but Jessie, my dear Mrs. Lacey, was so ardent and enthusiastic, and withal so sensitive, that she would not bear censure very coolly. But let me hear all about it," she continued, glancing at the gentleman, to intimate they were engaged, and would not hear, as she seated herself at Mrs. Lacey's feet.

"Ah," returned the kind old lady, with a cheerful smile, "you have come to plead Jessie's cause, as of old. But I did not intend to blame the child, I only wrote plain worldly sense to her."

"But you know, Jessie could not understand worldly sense," interrupted Isabella, "it would be worse than Greek to her."

"And that was why I wrote practically," returned Mrs. Lacey. "A man like Mr. Burton would not understand her fancies, and it is easier for the young to succumb, and adopt other ideas, than for the old. She can learn worldly wisdom, and he cannot sympathize with her utopian visions."

"Then she the more needs our sympathy," said Isabella. "Deprived of both her parents so young—thrown upon the care of a stranger, although a relative; with no one to feel for her or palliate her faults, I am sure, if she appealed to you for counsel and sympathy, they were not withheld."

"It was given," returned Mrs. Lacey; "I fear, in too plain words. The sympathy I felt; but I forbore its expression, to enforce the more strongly what I deemed prudence. But now I think of it, and remember her ardent sensitiveness, I wish I had written as my heart dictated, and told her to do as her feelings prompted; that, at least, there was always a home for her with me."

"But what was the subject upon which you could give cold, worldly advice?" asked Isabella.

"Upon almost the only subject which troubles a young maiden's happiness, matrimony," replied Mrs. Lacey.

"But Jessie is still too young to have much anxiety about that," remarked Isabella.

"And that was why I urged prudent considerations," said Mrs. Lacey. "There did not appear any immediate danger of a repugnant husband being forced upon her, and perhaps her mind, or her uncle's, might change before the final consummation of his project."

"Compulsory marriages are behind the age, or Jessie would have been my sister now," returned Isabella, with a smile, "for that, I remember, was one of my childhood's bright day-dreams. But who or what is Jessie's intended husband to be? I think her uncle was a bachelor;

therefore, there cannot be a dreaded cousin."

"Not a cousin—but something like one; an adopted son of Mr. Burton. But his name or connections I do not understand. Jessie only mentions him as bugbear Tom, and she had never seen him."

"But what is Mr. Burton to do, should the young gentleman also prove opposed to the proposition? and what is to be the penalty, if Jessie refuses obedience?"

"In case Jessie refuses, she is not to inherit any of her uncle's property—and probably the gentleman is more amiably disposed. Mr. Burton's earnest wish for the union appears to be to keep his fine estate entire; and if the parties were pleased with the matter, it would be a desirable and proper family arrangement."

"But if you used that as an argument to reconcile Jessie to the measure," interrupted Isabella, with a gay laugh, "you chose an unfortunate term; for I well remember her horror of proper things when we were quite little girls."

"I do not remember," said Mrs. Lacey, interrogatively.

"I presume, you never knew of it," returned Isabella, still laughing. "I do not remember distinctly, but I think Mrs. Graham wished Jessie to do something, at which she rather demurred; and Mrs. Graham made some remark, that it was proper for a little girl to obey her mother without a question. Jessie started up with an air which would have done honor to a tragic queen; 'Mamma,' said she, 'tell me that it is right, but don't say it is proper, for it puts me in mind of Dash's kennel—it seems just like a dog's house.' Mrs. Graham could not keep from laughing but she asked her what she meant. Jessie explained, that a few days before, she was out with Chole, and a man came to bring some articles which her father had purchased on a ship to the house, and she saw him go and look at Dash's kennel, and he said it was 'proper nice'—'jest the proper place to keep the dumb critters in, and when he got home, he would build old Boss jest sich a proper nice house.' You remember her powers of mimicry, and will not be surprised that I remember her repugnance to proper things, after seeing her imitate the sailor—and the memory is even more ludicrous than the scene; for now I can realize even more vividly the tiny tragic, and the closing burlesque."

Mrs. Lacey laughed heartily at this reminiscence of Jessie's early days. After some further conversation, Isabella remarked,

"And it is decided, is it? that I am to write Jessie all the kind things you have said and propose, and invite her to return to her early friends and home?"

"Provided," returned Mrs. Lacey, "she has found no dearer friends, and that she is willing to return and learn *proper* things of me."

"But I will have no conditions annexed," returned Isabella, smiling, "if I am empowered as ambassador."

"Ladies," said Stanley, approaching and interrupting Isabella's remark, "a storm is more in unison with my humor than a siege, or I am positive your deliberations would have been blown up by some mining process. Come, in mercy," and he bent his knee in graceful mock gallantry, "relieve me from the tediousness of entertaining two gentlemen so dull that nothing but wine or the smiles of beauty can arouse them from the chilling point of sleepiness. —See," he continued, "Fred is arranging the periods of a Latin oration which is to rival Cicero—see how he knits his brow! he dreams he is in the Forum startling the judges with his soul-stirring eloquence—But, no, more like, he dreams himself a—"

"Severely taxed man for coming to dine with an old lady, who leaves her friends to amuse themselves, and was too selfish to invite enough people to amuse one another," said Mrs. Lacey, finishing Stanley's sentence for him.

"And Carlton has gone to sleep standing by that window," continued Stanley. "For a half hour, I have been watching to see him fall down. Do you think he is ossified!" he asked, with ludicrous seriousness.

"If so," said Isabella, laughing, "we will arouse the dreamer and change the man of bone to a more impressible substance."

And she turned to the piano and commenced a symphony of that low, exquisite music, which steals upon the ear like some far-off strain of melody, which we list to catch lest we should lose its faintest note. From the symphony she struck into a lively life-stirring opera, which at once aroused her listeners and reminded them that their musician belonged to a less angelic sphere than where, from their abstractedness, they had credited the music came from which was entrancing their senses. Her brother and Carlton both approached and ranged themselves with Stanley behind her.

"Bravo! bravo!" exclaimed Stanley, as she finished and rose from the instrument. "But sing like that, and you shall be crowned *prima donna*."

Both Mrs. Lacey and Carlton solicited her to join her voice with the instrument, and with as much kindness as grace she consented—and Isabella Belmont could not, if she had desired, perpetrate an ungraceful act.

Poor, poor Carlton! did thy guardian

angel sleep, or was he spiteful who suffered thee to be exposed, unarmèd an occupied heart, to the power of such a magazine of charms! Beauty, tender vivacity, superior accomplishments, worse than all for thee, an heiress of immense wealth. If thou hadst found diamond without the gilding of its gilding, there might have been hope. Pride forbids a poor, young, unfledged yer from seeking to appropriate a gem, lest he might be accused of a mercenary spirit. Poor Carlton! some kind deliver thee from the perils which envy thy peace. For thine own happiness, may thou be a man—and forget!

## CHAPTER X.

Mr. and Mrs. Butler and their children arrived, without farther adventure, in New York. Jessie and Emma were delighted with the novelty of the journey, and the former did not get out of rule, and confined upon herself a lecture upon propriety once since the adventure in the street. From Philadelphia to New York she passed in the cars over the flat plains of New Jersey. Emma and Jessie had turned the back of their seat toward the locomotive to protect their eyes from the chance cinders which the draft of air always throws over the passengers in road cars, unless they suffer the inconvenience of keeping the windows closed with natural curiosity, they wished to all that the rapidity of their conveyance allowed, and desired also to enjoy as much comfort in the indulgence of that curiosity as circumstances permitted. Mrs. Butler, before seating herself, had whispered to them that their innovation might be considered an impropriety, but Jessie boldly declared her eyes of more importance to her than any custom established by ignorance and followed by the laity; and Mrs. Butler, by necessity, yielded the point in controversy.

Jessie soon wearied of the tame landscape, and as the noise of the drowned her voice, she kept up a lively conversation with Emma.

"The gentleman opposite me," said "I am sure is a Yankee schoolmaster: the 'land of steady habits.'"

"Why do you think so?" asked Emma. "I can see no badge of his profession mark of his birth-place."

"He is evidently an educated man," returned Jessie, "intelligent and shrewd; you can see, his conversation rivets attention of his companion, who is a gentleman in appearance, and apparently one to listen with such deep interest tirade of ignorance and volubility."

"But are there no intelligent, interesting men but Connecticut schoolmasters?" asked Emma, laughing.

"None that would wear a snuff brown coat, made by a country tailor after the fashion of the pilgrim fathers," returned Jessie.

"How long," asked Emma, laughing heartily, "since you became a philosopher on character from the fashion of coats?"

While Jessie and Emma were still commenting good-humoredly upon their fellow passengers, the cars stopped at one of the stations.

"I think," said the gentleman, whom Jessie had named the Yankee schoolmaster, addressing his companion and looking from the window, "that the soil is more fertile through the country which we have been passing, than in our region."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Jessie, entirely oblivious that she was addressing a stranger, in a crowded car, at least, very abruptly, "where *can* you reside?"

"In Connecticut, miss," replied the stranger, politely, but slightly amused at her energetic manner and phraseology.

"No wonder, then," she returned with the most unconscious *naïveté*, "that they raise wooden nutmegs there."

Both her manner and remark caused a hearty laugh from those who heard it, and gave her intimation that she was out of "order."

She blushed as she met Mrs. Butler's reproving glance, but Jessie Graham never could stop to think beforehand what other people would do, or what the world would "say." Her thoughts flowed too rapidly to admit of comparisons and deductions before they were uttered. The difference between her mind and Mrs. Butler's, or those better disciplined, might be compared by the mountain rill and the trained stream of a pleasure-ground. The waters of both, indeed, may be equally pure; but the mountain's brook runs laughingly and gaily on without a thought whether it forms a cascade or a mud-puddle; while the ditched stream of the pleasure-ground flows with gentle murmurs over its paved pebbly bed, into its velvet rimmed reservoir. And by *artificial* means its surplus waters are drained off, that there may be no danger of its ever overflowing the green, grassy banks on its margin.

Mr. Dwight, to fulfill a previous engagement, was necessitated to remain a few days in Philadelphia; and Henry Raymond was to join them in New York, but had not returned from a country excursion eastward when they arrived.

"And this," said Jessie, looking from a window of their parlor, which commanded an extensive prospect in Broadway, "this

is the renowned avenue of display—the undisputed empire of fashion—the greatest thoroughfare for apes on the American continent—"

"From your charitable remarks," interrupted Emma, "I suppose you intend to join the fashionable throng, and add one more to the list of imitative bipeds."

"Certainly," returned Jessie, mischievously, "when Henry returns for a proper escort. And as we are to be cooped up until then, after dinner to-day I shall pay a visit to the public parlors. We might as well have staid at home as to be confined to our own rooms—I want to see some of these pedestrians nearer."

"But you are aware, Miss Graham," remarked Mrs. Butler, "that Mr. Butler is engaged particularly after dinner."

"I am not aware," returned Jessie, "that Mr. Butler's engagement has anything to do with my visit to the saloon—I don't go there to see him."

"But I should not like to go there without him," replied Mrs. Butler, "and it would be so improper—"

"Will it be improper for us to eat soon?" pettishly interrupted Jessie; "if I am to be shut up in some dark hole for fear I shall be naughty, I shall resort to the experiment of children in such cases—scream with all my might to see who will come and let me out."

"That I would do with the greatest pleasure," exclaimed Henry, who had returned, and in company with Mr. Butler had entered the room unnoticed.

"Oh, Henry!" exclaimed Emma, with outstretched hands; and then remembering that perhaps Mrs. Butler would think her undisguised delight improper, she stopped embarrassed, and the crimsoned tide of ingenuous confusion spread over her face and neck.

"My fair Emma!" was the lover's quick response, as he clasped the hands which had been extended so frankly and invitingly towards him. After due compliments, inquiries, and mutual explanations, the plan of future operations began to be discussed.

"But you have not told us," said Henry, addressing Jessie, "what very naughty act you had committed, for which Mrs. Butler had threatened the punishment of 'down cellar' or a 'dark closet.'"

"My crime was in the prospective," replied Jessie; "and your presence will, I rust, make my act one of commendation, rather than condemnation."

And how true it is, under different circumstances, in the opinion of "the world" (that bugbear of grown-up children), the same act changes from black to white! What one may do with perfect impunity; another receives the most severe censure for. And even in overt acts against the peace and

well-being of the body politic—acts to which the laws give the cognomen of crime—even for these, one man is severely punished; while another, who has committed the same act upon a larger and more daring scale, not only escapes from all consequences of his crime, but for the fruits, receives the adulation of the multitude. Are statutes but mere farces for the terror of children and the cowardly? or are wrong and crime only so when the offender has not the means of purchasing absolution from its consequences?

The Roman Church has received the most unqualified condemnation from Protestants for selling “indulgences” and granting absolutions from sin: is the practice of Protestant communities even better?

We are no apologist for the errors of the Roman Church—we dislike oppression, wrong, injustice, and hypocrisy wherever we may meet them;—but in the nineteenth century the power of “THE WORLD” is as absolute over its subjects, as the rule of the Pope over the Roman Church. And we have looked darkly through the veil of life, if the august sovereign of the present era does not sell as many “indulgences” and absolutions from sin and crime, as did the Roman Church in the “dark ages” of its absolute rule.

“The World,” we admit, is a tolerably good world; but it is not immaculate, and has its “cash price” as well as other usurpers. Right cannot be commuted, nor error change its nature, because it may be fostered by public opinion.

After dinner, Henry accompanied the ladies upon a sight-seeing expedition. They first passed down Broadway towards the Battery, which they had nearly reached when Jessie’s attention was attracted by an iron railing which enclosed a small space with a very little pond and large pile of stones in the centre.

“The New Yorkers,” said Jessie, “must possess uncommon reverence for ancient relics.”

“I am at a loss,” replied Henry, “to understand from what source you draw such an inference, as I believe the reverse is the fact.”

“How then,” continued Jessie, “am I to account for their preserving the unsightly ruins of an old chimney in the very centre of their most fashionable avenue?”

“You must explain before I can understand you,” returned Henry, closely scrutinizing her countenance, to see whether she was serious or joking.

“Your understanding must be very obtuse,” said Emma, half pettishly, for she thought he was intending to hoax them for asking so many questions.

“I have been looking at the same object,” she continued, “these five minutes, and wondering what it was—but it does look

like the foundation of some primitive rude chimney, such a one as we saw among the mountains last summer.”

As the whole party’s attention was now directed to the subject of remark, Henry could no longer remain ignorant of the object.

“Upon my word, ladies,” said he, laughing only as a young and healthy man can laugh, “your remarks are very complimentary to the taste of the good inhabitants of this city. A chimney! ha! ha! no, the object of your curiosity is one of their most celebrated fountains.”

“A fountain!” exclaimed the tourists, incredulously.

“Truly so,” returned Henry, more seriously, but still laughing.

“Then they had ought to keep the water running, or label it as the painter did his picture of the horse, for, without one or the other, a stranger would never suspect its design.”

“Verily,” said Jessie, “I thought it the remains of some old chimney—perhaps Peter Stuy—” and she paused abruptly.

“Are you ill?” asked Henry, sobered by the glance which he caught of her pale, troubled countenance.

“Jessie has been complaining of the headache all the morning,” interposed Emma, fibbing with woman’s tact to shield her friend from further questioning.

“Then we had better return,” proposed Mrs. Butler.

“No, no,” said Jessie, striving to master her momentary agitation, “the walk will do me good; did you not tell us of a pleasant promenade by the water’s side?”

“But I think we had better return,” said Emma, seconding Mrs. Butler’s proposition, and glancing with an intelligent archness into Jessie’s face.

The color mounted over her neck and brow as she caught the mischief which lay mirrored in Emma’s laughing eye, as quickly as it had receded a moment before. But she offered no further opposition to the proposed return to the hotel.

Ah! consciousness makes a coward even of Jessie Graham! she so desires to prolong their walk that she dare not insist upon it; and tacitly admits of the headache, when if it was throbbing with severe pain she would not know it.

The fascinating stranger of the thunder-storm scene passed them in earnest conversation with another gentleman. Emma, too, recognized him; but, fortunately for Jessie’s confusion, Mrs. Butler did not. And he was so earnestly engaged that he did not remark his former fellow-passengers.

Thus we go on in life jostling the very elbows of our most ardent desires; but, blindly preoccupied with some present care, do not see them when within our

reach. How much pain and suffering it would prevent if our guardian angel carried a prompter's bell, to give us notice when to stop and when to go on; when to use our eyes, and when our ears. Nay, we often make a stumbling-block of our very happiness; vaulting as far over on the other side as we were on this, and then, perhaps, give it a malediction, that it presumed to arrest our eagerness. And perhaps, too, the greatest source of social misery is our want of confidence in each other. Distrust begets the reality of its own shadow, and no more mischievous maxim was ever uttered than "treat every man as if you anticipated finding him a rogue." No, no; treat even rogues as you would honest men, and they must be debased and have forgotten every impulse of humanity, if they do not reward your trust and confidence with honest and honorable conduct. It is an admitted axiom, that temptation may lead even very honest men to sin and wrong; and is not the position as strong, that provocation to do good may entice even villains to noble and praiseworthy acts?

When they returned, Henry related to Mr. Butler the ladies' whimsical mistake at the fountain, which caused much merriment. But as none of the remarks were complimentary to the taste which projected that monument of—(what shall I call it? art, or folly?) I will not record them.

Mr. Dwight rejoined the party, and they proceeded northward. In consequence of the extreme heat of the weather, they took passage in one of the afternoon boats, and landed by twilight at West Point.

As a greater portion of the students and officers of the military academy there are from Virginia and the middle states, both Henry and Mr. Butler had several acquaintances to meet, which would render their stay but the more agreeable. And Mr. Dwight also had several friends in the institution.

The morning after their arrival, was devoted to visiting the scenes of historic incident in the vicinity.

"After dinner, ladies," said one of their gallant guides, when they returned to the hotel, "permit me to be your cicerone of the picturesque in our neighborhood."

"It is so wild," returned Jessie, "I wish you would treat us with an impromptu picnic to-morrow, in the most picturesque glen of the vicinity."

"It shall be done," returned the gentleman, "provided you ladies will not accuse me of seeking fatigue for you instead of wild beauty."

Mrs. Butler offered no objection to the arrangement, and Mr. Butler only very gallantly observed, that "ladies in search of pleasure would encounter fatigue which would kill them if performed perforce of necessity."

The gentlemen laughed, the ladies endeavored to call up a frown, and Jessie asked Mr. Dwight to ring the bell. He complied with the request, and a waiter soon made his appearance. Jessie gave the man her orders in a low tone, and returned to her seat.

"I know not why it is," said Mrs. Butler, "but gentlemen generally have as great horror of pic-nics as ladies have a predilection—"

The return of the waiter bearing on a huge salver a large box of cigars marked "Havanna, extra prime," which he respectfully presented to Jessie, interrupted her remark.

"Gentlemen," said she, taking the box in both hands, "let this be the peace offering between us—if this box accompanies the refreshments which you will order, each one's taste will be catered for."

A hearty laugh at her providence was the only answer which the gentlemen made to her offering, *but it was not refused.*

[Query. Would gentlemen always retain their good-nature at the mention of pic-nics, if their fair companions would remember also to provide cigars?]

The gentlemen made their arrangements—an invitation was generally extended to the inmates of the hotel, and at ten o'clock the next morning the party started on their excursion.

"We must dispense with the strict punctilio of etiquette to-day," said young Raymond; "we are rather an original party. Each one knows himself, and but few of us know our neighbors; let us make our own introductions—To begin: your humble servant, ladies and gentlemen, is Henry Raymond of Virginia."

"My friends," he continued, falling back beside Mr. and Mrs. Butler, "the Rev. Mr. Butler and lady of Virginia also—Miss Graham and Miss Magnum, wards *pro tem.* of Mr. Butler—Mr. Dwight of Connecticut."

Mrs. Butler was shocked at this wholesale introduction to nobody knew who, and replied with chilling dignity to the salutations of the company; but Henry's lead was universally followed, and before starting all knew, at least, each other's names.

"Why, Henry," said Jessie in a whisper, "you have shown yourself equal to the grand occasion—keep up the same spirit through the day, and you will be entitled to two cigars."

"Why, Henry," said Emma, in his other ear, "don't you see how offended Mrs. Butler is with your off-hand introductions?"

"Pshaw!" he returned, laughing, "Mrs. Butler is not my guardian, if she is yours,

and I cannot have our pleasure spoiled to-day by mere ceremony—the whole party look worthy of an introduction to even Mrs. Butler, and I am disposed to treat them so.”

Mr. Dwight, either as choice, or by the compulsion of propriety, offered his particular attendance upon Jessie, somewhat to the discomfiture of the gallant cadet who was most active in getting up the party. But he consoled himself with the belief that in the romantic wilds which he had fixed upon as the scene of their conviviality, there would be a “change of partners,” and, until then, contented himself to remain one of the general “bachelor guard,” as the gentlemen outnumbered the ladies.

Jessie, too, would have preferred a change of partners at the outset, as since Mr. Dwight had rejoined them at New York, he had been uncommonly dignified and stupid.

Perhaps he had a suspicion that he never could win her, even if “Master Tom” did not fulfill the desired family arrangement. Perhaps he still retained a jealous resentment for the evident partiality for the stranger of the thunder-scene. And perhaps—but it is of no use to endeavor to account for the vagaries of a dignified, scientific bachelor. It would be easier to predict the fancies of a miss in her teens.

In the first place, a man has no business to wed himself irrevocably to science, before he has wedded a wife. A married man may fly to any problem in the arcana of life, science, or philosophy, to escape a “Caudle” lecture; but a proud, learned bachelor is one of the most tedious companions in christendom. He feels that his preference sufficiently honors the lady, without any of those little, gallant attentions which the sex delight to receive; and he also fears to commit himself by them, lest it may deteriorate from the respect which he demands. Therefore, he throws himself back upon what he deems dignified reserve, and wearies the object of his attention by his stupidity. He is so conscious of his own high merit, that he cannot descend to be agreeable. And this, perhaps, explains why that many a lovely maiden has rejected an honorable and noble man, and accepted an empty-pated fellow. The one commanded respect—the other, by his constant endeavors to please, like a playful kitten or puppy, won affection.

The destination of the party was the vicinity of a beautifully wild waterfall. They reached there in high spirits, and found the hampers of provision which they dispatched for their luncheon, safely stowed away in a cool place; and in the basin of a limpid spring, were some dozen

bottles, the necks of which looked marvelously like champagne bottles, or, at least, so Jessie declared.

“And your smoking-room, gentlemen,” said she, “you will find in some dark muddy place where we cannot go.”

The day passed as the days do usually at such parties, with more fatigue, perhaps, than enjoyment. As Mr. Dwight was also assistant cavalier to Mrs. Butler, the young cadet found an opportunity of attaching himself to Jessie’s side, and tenaciously kept his post for the remainder of the day.

“I believe, sir,” said he to Mr. Dwight, when they seated themselves for refreshments, “that I have robbed you of your lady, but the temptation was too great to resist, and I trust you will forgive me for appropriating to myself the first lady I found without an attendant.”

“As the lady, undoubtedly, has gained by the exchange,” returned Mr. Dwight, “it would be ungenerous for me to complain.”

“Oh, sir,” continued the young gentleman, blushing at what he construed as irony upon his presumption, “the lady has not been consulted—and now, conscious of my own selfishness and her loss, I shall resign my seat to you.”

“It is of no consequence,” replied Mr. Dwight, hastily seating himself by Mrs. Butler, annoyed by the notice others were taking of the remarks.

“If it is of no consequence to you,” said the young gentleman, reseating himself, and lowering his tone so that it only reached Jessie’s ear, “it is some to me, and it would be happiness ever to keep my station by your side.”

“You forget,” returned Jessie, “that the reward of you gentlemen is in my keeping, and if you address another compliment to me through the day, I shall not give you any cigar after dinner.”

“I would reject an empire if it called me from”—

“Nonsense!” interrupted Jessie, “you shall have a half dozen cigars, and for your punishment be obliged to smoke them all in the most dreary spot of the dark dell which I have given the gentleman for a smoking-room.”

“In mercy,” said he, rising gracefully on one knee, “do not doom me to believe that our acquaintance will end in smoke.”

“I have brought Emma to you,” said Henry approaching, “and shall I act as your deputy in distributing the product of your watchful thought?”

“Pray do,” replied Jessie; “and to your care I will consign Mr. Cabell—he is to have six cigars, and be obliged to smoke them all.”

“By taking so many,” returned the gentleman. “I should rob others, and I must



cline Miss Graham's generosity. But I will relieve—"

At that moment the waiters appeared bringing the doubtful bottles, and between opening one of them, taking wine with the ladies, and offering a few sentiments, Mr. Cabell forgot to finish his sentence, or relieve Jessie of his attendance, if that was what he was about to propose.

The contents of the bottles soon disappeared, and most of the gentlemen also, as it was generally understood where the cigars could be found, and they could not, with politeness, "refuse to accept a fair lady's boon," or that was the excuse for the indulgence.

After the gentlemen rejoined the ladies, the party, refreshed and in high spirits, started to explore the still more wild scenery bordering the waterfall. The falls were romantically beautiful, not on a scale to impress the mind with awe, but merely picturesque.

"You have not told us the name of these beautiful falls," said Emma, addressing one of the gentlemen who belonged to West Point.

"They are called 'BUTTERMILK FALLS,'"\* he replied.

"Oh, profanation!" exclaimed Jessie; "that name would do for the days of good old Deidrich Knickerbocker; but in this era of modern exquisiteness, it ought to be rechristened 'ICE-CREAM CASCADE!'"

At the same instant she stepped a little on one side to catch the reply of her companion, which the noise of the water rendered indistinct, and the moss slid from beneath the pressure of her foot, and she was precipitated into the basin below.

Before the rest of the party had learned the cause of Emma's wild shriek, Mr. Cabell had divested himself of his coat, and sprang into the flood. Perhaps the depth was not dangerous, but as she had fallen immediately beneath the falls, the power of the water had forced her instantly to the bottom.

Mr. Butler, Dwight, and Henry, each with one bound, placed themselves at different points upon the margin of the pool, and the others of the party who perceived the accident remained paralyzed as they saw the current of the eddy submerge the form of the gallant, intrepid young man. Fortunately, he was a most expert swimmer, beside being naturally endowed with remarkable presence of mind; and, as he sprang into the water, had marked the exact spot where she sank. His descent was almost at the same moment with hers, consequently he was enabled to seize her with

a firm grasp, before the agitation of the eddy had carried her beyond his reach. And a moment after, he rose to the surface, bearing her breathless form in his arms, and nearly exhausted himself by the force of the current. He rose sufficiently near Mr. Dwight to enable the latter to catch a portion of Jessie's dress, and they were instantly drawn upon the bank.

"Blow! blow in her mouth!" exclaimed the noble young man, still retaining his presence of mind, but from weakness necessitated to yield his suffering burthen to the care of her friends.

Excited and alarmed, they did as people usually do under such circumstances—yield implicit obedience to the master spirit, which dare incur the responsibility of directing and commanding.

Her breath had been suspended by the shock of immersion, and their exertions soon, to their great joy, restored reanimation.

But the accident had destroyed the spirits of the whole party, and they immediately made preparations to return. One of the gentlemen from the academy conducted Mr. Butler and his charge to a cottage not very distant, where by the aid of the golden talisman, and the kindness of the woman, they procured a change of clothes for her, more indicative of freedom than fashion. But they were grateful, and liberally rewarded the woman for making their late gay companion a fright.

The first time Jessie met her preserver, she gave her hand and burst into tears. Words were void of meaning to express the emotions of her heart; and she could only, in her deep gratitude, weep. And there could be no response to gratitude thus expressed, but silence. Deep feeling never exhibits itself with volubility. There is a gloom in gladness, as there is "joy in grief."

## CHAPTER XI.

Two days after the incident recorded in the last chapter, Jessie having recovered from all effects of her sudden bath, the party took their leave of West Point.

The final adieux between Mr. Cabell and Jessie were necessarily rather warm, and they both parted with the anticipation of meeting again in Virginia the ensuing winter. His parents resided in that state, and both from Henry and Mr. Butler he had received a warm and pressing invitation to visit them upon his return home. Mrs. Butler could not object to the invitation as improper, as it was given by the gentlemen; but upon another point, she did not fail to enforce the precepts which governed her life.

\* The author does not refer to the more sublime falls of the same name near Ithaca, N. Y.; and if she has used any licence in the location of her scenery, she can only hint that she is not writing a geography, and makes what nature lacks.

When he was retiring, Jessie pulled a ring of exquisite workmanship from her finger, saying, as she presented it to him, "Will you wear this as a token of my constant gratitude for the priceless service which you have rendered me?"

Mrs. Butler remarked the young man's flush of gratified feeling, as he put the ring upon his finger; but her sense of hearing was not sufficiently acute to catch his murmured reply, although she noticed the deepened color upon Jessie's cheek as she listened.

"Miss Graham," said she, "are you aware that Mr. Cabell may draw a very improper inference from your memento of gratitude?"

"From the generous nobleness of his character," replied Jessie, "I should judge the very opposite."

"But under no circumstances," continued Mrs. Butler ("except to an affianced lover, and then, it had better be dispensed with), is it proper for a young lady to give a gentleman a ring to be worn as a constant remembrance."

"My dear madam," returned Jessie, somewhat excited, "have you not discovered that my understanding is very obtuse in learning the cold rules of propriety? You give me credit for truth and frankness, and yet you are constantly reproving every exhibition of them. God made me a human being as well as a woman—and shall I be debarred from exercising one of the noblest emotions which throbs in the human breast, because I am young, unmarried, and a woman! Oh, I would rather be a dog and bay the moon, than a woman obliged to repress every generous impulse for fear of misconstruction—I cannot believe the world all vicious or malicious, and yet you would have me treat it so."

"But, my dear Miss Graham," commenced Mrs. Butler.

"My dear," interrupted Mrs. Butler, "Jessie but acted from the noble wish to leave some memento as assurance that she would ever remember the incalculable service which Mr. Cabell rendered her. The ring was given but as a token of gratitude, and you need not fear Mr. Cabell will draw any other inference."

"I should not fear it," returned Mrs. Butler, "but she has betrayed so much emotion each time he has called since the accident, and—"

"How could she avoid it," interposed Emma, "when she thinks what might have been the result, but for his intrepidity?" And the lovely girl's eyes filled with tears, as she thought of what might have been the consequences.

"Indeed," said Henry, laughing, "had I seen the gentleman, I should have claimed the lady herself as my reward."

"And would that have been a reward or punishment?" asked Jessie, archly, restored by the warm defence of her friends to good-humor.

"Questionable, truly," returned Henry, "but that is the award usually given gentlemen for fishing fair maidens from the darksome waters—I suppose the gentlemen claim them from the 'right of discovery,' and it is as the chance may be whether they have found a curse or blessing.—But stop," he continued, as he noticed Mr. Dwight's marked silence, "there was another gentleman whose service on that fearful occasion ought not to be forgotten. As you are settling accounts, what is to be passed to Mr. Dwight's credit?"

"Ever grateful remembrance," replied Jessie; "and a ring also," she continued, mischievously, drawing an amethyst from her finger. "This," she added, apologetically, pointing to her only remaining ring, a splendid brilliant, "I cannot part with—it was my mother's. But please keep this as a slight memorial of what I owe you—and let me beg you to take the paltry thing, that I may never be accused of partiality to either of my preservers."

Thus adjured, Mr. Dwight accepted it; but even if he had worn ornaments, to have displayed one of Jessie's rings, he would have been obliged to have suspended it on a ribbon from his neck or button-hole. And withal, he was dissatisfied both with the token and the manner in which it was offered.

But he could not refuse it for fear the refusal might be charged to some latent, childish jealousy. And he was so long in arranging the facts and drawing his conclusions, that the time when a refusal might have been gracefully uttered, was long past before he had arrived at his decision.

Oh, philosophers are dunces in trivial, every-day affairs! They train their minds so closely to logical deductions, that they cannot, womanlike, "jump at a conclusion," from one side of the argument.

And the man who cut a large hole for his cat, and a small one for his kitten, in the same door, was no greater dolt than most of his fellows.

These abstract, logical, philosophizing humanities ought to be shut up with their favorite tomes! for what do they know or perform of active social duties?

In their researches they may have learned that "man is an animal," consequently, must have physical wants—that "the earth and the inhabitants thereof" exist, hence, there must be a supreme cause. But all sympathy and emotion they would root from their very natures, because these essences of humanity cannot be reduced to a rule of exactitude.

Out upon such philosophers! They

may study the past; but they live in the future; and only regard the present as time to immortalize their own names by begetting some theory for the benefit of mankind which shall rival his who taught, eighteen hundred years ago, of love, mercy, and faith as rules of action! Nay, nay; the village busybody with her bag of simples as an excuse for her gossip, has done more good to her kind, than one of these dreaming, reasoning, theorizing philosophers, whose intended good can only benefit humanity, when the lion and lamb shall lie down together, and man shall have become the worthy disciple of him whose doctrines they are laboring to improve! He only taught of love, purity, and truth—they would exalt the intellect above affection, reason above innocence, and knowledge above virtue!

Out upon such reformers! out upon the "*cold intellectualism*" of the age! men have deified and made a God of it. Did he, who taught "as a God," ever exalt reason above the affections? were his teachings to the head or the heart? Away with this speculating, analyzing philosophy, which appeals to the intellect alone. It may make infidels, but seldom Christians. It would analyze a tear instead of sympathizing with the grief which caused it. It would reduce a thrill of affection to a palpable existence! because reason, the tyrannical power of their mind, must have demonstration of every thing presented to its cognizance, before it can believe!

The intellect knows, can perceive and examine, but it has no hope, no faith, no love. And there are many things in the teachings of Jesus, which must be received by faith.

And if the intellect of these *reasonable* philosophers is ever enlisted to ameliorate the *present* sufferings which sin has entailed upon humanity—to raise up the degraded and "bind up the broken-hearted," it is because of some far-off evil—something which they speculate upon as possible, and not what they see as actual.

There is Betty and Johnny, Sammy and Susan at their next door, or perchance in their own kitchens; but their ignorance, their degradation, their sorrows, never enlist their sympathies, because—they *have none*! They are above the weakness of feeling—they may, *must* speculate, theorize, and above all *publish their attempts at benevolence and justice*!

Out! out upon such philosophers and reformers! their pride of intellect has strangled the sympathies and sensibilities which God has implanted within the human breast to purify and refine it; and which ally humanity to divinity. They have forgotten that intellect but dignifies human nature; while sympathy, pure and godlike, alone sublimates it.

"Oh! if there is one law above the rest  
Written in wisdom—if there is a word  
That I could trace as with a pen of fire,  
Upon the unsummed temper of a child;  
If there is anything that keeps the mind  
Open to angel's visits, and repels  
The ministry of ills, 'tis human love."

Not that Mr. Dwight had reached the climax of reasonable insensibility, but he was fast verging towards it—an aspirant for its honors. And from logical deductions rather than experience, he had discovered that an ossified heart was less troublesome to its possessor than a suffering one. A kind of selfish reasonableness. And a selfish nature united with superiority of intellect; will produce a character nearer resembling his who "was more subtle than all the beasts of the field," than that of the spirit of goodness.

And the finale of Mr. Dwight's reflections, was, he *pocketed*, rather ungraciously, the ring he could not wear, because he was a too protracted thinker to carelessly refuse, with ready plea, a guerdon for "no service."

"Mr. Dwight," said Henry, who was vexed at the dilemma in which he saw he had involved both donor and donee, "you need not feel oppressed by retaining the keepsake of a 'fair lady,' as yours is not a token of partiality, but of old-fashioned gratitude."

"Worse and worse," muttered Henry to himself, "what the deuce does the man want?" and an inkling of the truth for the first time presented itself to his mind. "But, no, my man," he continued, as he noted the embarrassed expression of Mr. Dwight's countenance, "you can't have that, or I am much mistaken." And perhaps Mr. Dwight thought the same. But all of the party, from their own reasons, were ominously silent upon the subject afterwards.

"Ah, my dear Julia!" exclaimed Emma as she stepped on board the steamboat that afternoon, seizing the hand of a very pretty young lady, who was watching the landing and embarking of the passengers—or the landscape.

The young ladies were delighted to meet, and who is not happy to see a familiar face, even if it is not the most beloved one, when among strangers.

"Miss Graham, Miss Adams," continued Emma, as her friend, or acquaintance, whichever she might be, and there is a difference between the two, was a stranger to the rest of the party.

"Miss Adams, Mr. Dwight," she added, as Jessie and herself were leaning upon Mr. Dwight's arm, while Henry attended to that necessary *et cetera* of travelers, looked after their "baggage." After the confusion and bustle of "landing" and "going on board" had subsided, our party found themselves reunited, and Miss Adams found her mother.

Mrs. Adams was a rich widow, with no very serious drawback to the claim of young but a grown-up daughter. That children will grow, and in time become men and women, is one of the most positive objections to early marriages, unless one is sure that one husband or one wife will be sufficient of the commodity for his or her benefit. And there is no jealousy or rivalry so provoking, and with so few apologies for indulgence, as a par sample of one's self, with the decided and undoubted advantage of youth.

In her girlhood, Mrs. Adams had been a *belle* and beauty. Now she was in the full bloom of matured womanhood, still beautiful and fascinating; perhaps as anxious to lose the freedom of widowhood by the acceptance of a master and husband, as she had been to yield the joys and triumphs of girlhood from the same cause, earlier in life. But now, both to her pride and chagrin, she had a fac simile of her own charms, but still fresher, ever by her side. This consciousness, joined with her maternal love and pride, to secure a good prize for her daughter, while she lost nothing for herself, imparted a shade of *fussiness* (we can't help the word) to her manner.

She was truly intelligent, intellectual, and pleasing, but before a stranger could understand her good qualities, he was so fully impressed with the ludicrousness of her *fidgits*, he could not judge impartially of her excellencies.

"I cannot express how much delighted I am," said Mrs. Adams, addressing Emma, and arranging one of her own luxuriant raven ringlets, "in meeting with your party, Miss Magnum."

Emma made a fitting reply, expressive of her equal delight at the unexpected pleasure of Mrs. Adams' company.

"And I suppose, you young ladies," continued Mrs. Adams, glancing upon the trio of southern beauties by her side, and refastening her brooch, "anticipate a harvest of conquests at the springs?"

Miss Julia looked down and smiled as if her modesty would not allow her to publish her anticipations. Emma looked gravely at some far-off object, as if she did not hear the query. But Jessie was intently watching Mrs. Adams' attempts to rearrange her toilette, and as the lady's eye met hers, she felt compelled to make some reply.

"I can only speak for myself," said she; "and as I have no use for hair at present, if, as you have flatteringly suggested, I should harvest a *palatable* crop, I shall do as my good uncle's housekeeper does with her pepper-pods to preserve them—run them on a string, and hang them up to dry."

"You cannot be so cruel," returned Mrs.

Adams, laughing at the whimsicality of the conceit, and pulling one of her curls down to a more languishing length. "Cruelty is not one of the characteristics of a Virginian."

"I can make no claim to the honors of a Virginian," responded Jessie quickly, alarmed at her inadvertent mention of her uncle, "I claim nativity among the sunny isles of a southern ocean."

"The harvest to which you refer, madam," remarked Henry, coming to Jessie's relief, "is more likely to be gathered by more mature charms."

Mrs. Adams smiled benignantly upon the distinguished appearing young gentleman, and turned the brilliant bracelet upon her wrist. In so doing, she unclasped it, and before either of the ladies could proffer their assistance, Henry, with a graceful bow, bent down.

"Permit me, madam, to fasten that truant chain," and he delicately performed his office of tire-woman. And were it not that his heart and hand were truly and positively engaged, I might perhaps be pardoned for recording the supposition, that he slightly pressed the fair rounded arm which rested upon his hand. But as the chosen one was *present*, I suppose the hypothesis must be incorrect.

Mr. Butler made some remark changing the current of thought, and for the time withdrew the attention of the young people from Mrs. Adams' affectations. Mrs. Butler with her usual propriety seconded her husband's efforts; and the conversation became general and rather more sensible.

"What sport we have in prospect," said Jessie, addressing Emma, the first moment they were alone.

"Why so?" asked Emma, demurely, but too conscious of the occasion.

"Why so?" repeated Jessie; "why is not Mrs. Adams a fund of entertainment alone? and with Mrs. Butler as an offset—oh, it is admirable!"

"And you forget to add a mischievously malicious young lady to the comedy, who will not fail to improve every *mal-a-propos* act and word."

"You mistake," returned Jessie; "upon the mischievously malicious young lady depends the whole wit of the play."

"But your sport may be spoiled, should we chance to meet with some favored lord, count, or marquis—we should be forgotten in the brightness of his glory—for I cannot conceal from you, that a European tour of some few months when Mrs. Adams was a bride, has infected her with a mania for titles."

"Oh, I will cater to her pleasure, and if we do not part company too soon, provide her with a 'pacha with three tails,' fresh from the Ottoman empire."

"I am not sure that such a specimen of

nobility would suit her taste," returned Emma, smiling—"at least she would want to be sultana of the harem."

## CHAPTER XII.

SARATOGA was full to overflowing when the travelers reached their destination. Every room was engaged in the mammoth hotels, and a wag declared that "every leafing post and table had a paying occupant." The only alternative of our seekers of pleasure, was to take what then offered and to secure the first comfortable rooms vacated. Emma's and Jessie's apartment (for they were compelled to occupy the same room, or take two half a mile apart) was a small seven by nine affair, up three pair of stairs, and most admirably located, where the sun's rays fell upon the window "from rosy morn till dewy eve."

"This is comfort! this is pleasure!" exclaimed Jessie, completely out of good-humor. "There were not fools enough in the world, and I must add one to the number. Stay here roasted and smothered! I'll make an earthquake, but I'll dislodge somebody! Get on to the middle of your bed while I dress, and I will do you the same favor, to make room for your toilet."

Emma obeyed her injunction, laughing.

At that moment some one tapped at the door, and upon opening it, Mrs. Butler entered.

"I called to see," said she, "if you were comfortably situated. The house is very full, but Mr. Butler has promise of more commodious apartments in the morning."

"Our present one," returned Jessie, "was erected for the express accommodation of two midges visiting a fashionable watering-place, instead of five feet two human beings."

"To-morrow we shall be more pleasantly situated," responded Mrs. Butler, soothingly, "and until then, we will take refuge in the public parlors. As soon as you are dressed, send word to me, and Mr. Butler will accompany us down."

"Shall we dress for dinner now?" asked Jessie, in anything but a pleasant tone.

"Certainly," replied Mrs. Butler, "we cannot make two toilets to-day in these rooms."

"What is or the tapis?" asked Jessie as soon as Mrs. Butler had departed.

"Why?" responded Emma.

"Why, she is almost affectionate and kind; and this is the first time since we left home that she has troubled herself to inquire for our comfort."

"It is the first time she has had occasion so to do," returned Emma.

"But it makes me suspicious—you may be certain she has some point to carry, or my comfort would not trouble her."

"Nonsense!" returned Emma, "the size of your room is contracting your soul—come haste and dress, and let us see if your glass will not coax back your smiles."

"Ah, where is Mrs. Adams?"

"Not scolding and trifling like you, but placing every curl and ornament in its most becoming position. Come, haste, or I will call Mrs. Butler."

"Call her if you wish," returned Jessie, with a fresh outbreak of impatience, and flinging herself on her bed, "I am not going down to-day. I don't want to see, nor be seen."

"Why, what is the matter?" asked Emma, in real perplexity; "are you ill?"

"No: tired, weary, sad, cross—anything, so that I do not see a soul until to-morrow; haste and dress; make my excuses, and leave me alone."

"I shall do no such thing; nor allow you to fret yourself into a fever of vexations."

"If you love me, leave me," returned Jessie, resolutely turning her face to the wall.

And what was the matter! most surely we cannot tell. Whether it was the air, the discomfort of her apartment, or a mere whim, we cannot say. We never could account for the vagaries of warm, impetuous temperaments, which never have learned the salutary discipline of self-denial. At times, it seems they are out of humor merely for the pleasure of making their friends the more prize their pleasant and sunny spirits. Jessie's fault was want of self-discipline. She was perfectly agreeable as long as everything contributed to her amusement, but she could not cheerfully submit to those little trials which are nothing in truth. Heavy calamities, and deep sorrow, she would have met with a noble and perhaps christian-like resignation; but petty vexations disturbed the muddy waters of her temper; and with her, as with others in like circumstances, the best course to pursue was to leave her to eat her own bitterness. This buying with sugar-plums little or great babies' smiles, is always a poor method to obtain them gratuitously. And Emma, more from unhappiness because she could not cheer her friend, than from thought of leaving her to her own end of petulance" and repugnance, pressed herself, and summoning a waiter, proceeded to Mrs. Butler's room.

Jessie could not have given any cause herself to justify or excuse such an unusual spasm of petulance. Her room did not please, Mr. Dwight had annoyed her

in the morning by a relapse of tenderness and marked attentions, and Mrs. Adams had increased the annoyance by asking Emma in a sufficiently audible voice to reach Jessie's ear, if it was a positive engagement; and Emma had not denied the insinuation, but only replied, "Indeed, madam, I must refer you to the parties interested."

If she had not been among strangers, or if she had been where she could have joined the company and vented her ill-humor in sarcasm upon the whole world, like the effect of an emetic upon the physical system, the disgorgement of the bitterness would have restored the tone of her mind. But she felt that she was compelled to proper behavior, even without a lecture upon the subject from Mrs. Butler.

After Emma left her she indulged in every unpleasant retrospection she could summon up in memory's calendar, until perforce the very ridiculousness of her pouts (we regret to record, that ladies, and more especially young ladies, ~~over~~ indulge in such unseemly fits) forced their own cure.

There was still time to dress for dinner; should she improve it and send a message of repentance? or stay in her close room, and endure the punishment of her own ill-temper? The impulses of kindness and good-nature prompted the former, and her hand was on the bell-rope to execute the prompting, when obstinacy made her pause. She would not publish her own variableness, so she again seated herself, and, taking up a book which Emma had unpacked, she tried to read. A useless endeavor; for her mind was with the gay and social below.

How much it costs of effort, as well as sacrifices of happiness, to be sullen, unkind, and ill-tempered!

"Oh," said Emma, when she returned an hour after dinner, "how much you have lost."

"Not my dinner, surely," interrupted Jessie, half-smiling, and half something which a lady never should be; "that is, if I could preserve and gratify my appetite in an oven."

"I did not refer to the edible gratification merely, but to the company. You—"

"Pshaw!" again interrupted Jessie; "the thoughts of one simpleton half-distracted me; those of a hundred would have quite driven me crazy."

"And can you not think of any one who would have given you pleasure?"

"No," returned Jessie; "but the color deepened upon her cheek, as if her ingenuousness charged some equivocation upon the simple monosyllable, and she hastily added, "no, none likely to be here."

"Why, I thought you once said you

could enjoy an agreeable book, even if you picked it up on a public table," remarked Emma, mischievously.

"Was—did—I thought—" said Jessie, stammering, and stumbling from one word to another, without finding any which could ask the question which rose to her lips.

"Was—did—I thought—" repeated Emma, mimicking her manner. "I was certain your curiosity could be excited; do you remember any one now, whose presence would give you pleasure?"

"Emma!" said Jessie, looking up, "will you, too, be ungenerous?"

"No, no," returned the affectionate girl, throwing her arms around Jessie's neck; "but you piqued me into being tantalizing."

"The gentleman," she continued, "whom we met on board the steamboat during that fearful thunder-storm, was in the saloon when we went down, in company with another gentleman, who had letters of introduction to Mr. Butler; and, after conversing with him an hour, I am not surprised that he fascinated you so deeply."

During Emma's communication, Jessie's countenance had changed expression more than once. It was apparent that her thoughts had not reverted to him, when Emma first excited her curiosity; and it was also evident that there was more of pleasure than disappointment in her face, when informed of his arrival. But there was a mingled semblance of gratification and annoyance in her manner, and which predominated, or what caused them, she alone could determine; and, perhaps, it would have been, even to her, enigmatical. It is always, perchance, a question whether a young maiden, with her heart vibrating like the magnetic needle between opposing magnets, knows herself what she wants or most wishes. The instant that one of the loadstones gains the preponderance of power, the question is settled. The compass is not more true to the point of its attractions, than woman's heart to its affections *when* she loves. But whatever her thoughts might have been, her tone and words were those of half-bitterness. Was she vexed that her ill-humor had punished herself more than others?

"And did not Mrs. Butler have any lecture upon the propriety of making acquaintance with strangers?" she asked.

"But you forgot," returned Emma, "we were introduced to Mr. Belmont."

"A few words of idle ceremony can change the very nature of the same thing—'twas black, but now 'tis white, for you can give him his proper title. Were Mrs. Adams and Miss Julia honored also with an introduction?"

"Certainly; they were, with us and Mr.

Belmont and Mr. Carlton, presented with all ceremony."

"Well, I suppose, I, too, shall be honored by the due naming of the gentleman, when I appear; I have lost nothing by waiting for candle light."

"Lost nothing but the pleasure of meeting Mr. Belmont; he left with some English friends whom he met here, immediately after dinner."

"Lost! lost, indeed!" repeated Jessie, slowly, as if recalling some impression in the dim vista of childhood; "Belmont—and he told me that his residence was — It must have been Fred. Belmont, my baby love, and dear, dear Bel's brother; why could I not see it! he did not seem a stranger, and now I can remember Bel's features."

"You can easily find out from Mr. Carlton, whether your suppositions are correct. He is to remain here some time; indeed, I believe it is arranged between him and Mr. Butler that he joins us in our tour to Niagara," returned Emma.

"There is no supposition about it," replied Jessie. "I know it is Fred. Belmont, although I have not seen him since I was seven or eight years old. Did he ask anything about me?"

"You forgot that the idle ceremony of learning your name, when he made your acquaintance, was dispensed with."

"But if he had remembered me, he could have found some term to have made the inquiry."

"What, the young lady who talked with him in the thunder shower! or the lady in a chip hat and brown habit? I should question whether the fastidious Mr. Belmont would have made such an inquiry."

"I don't care anything about him, or what he would do! but, I do wish I could have heard of his sister, his mother, and dear old Mrs. Lacey; Bel has never written to me since she went to England—and Mrs. Lacey's last letter I have never answered, for it was full of Master Tom and propriety."

"I presume Mr. Carlton can answer all your inquiries; and I bear a message from Mrs. Butler, wishing to know if you are not sufficiently refreshed to join the company below; and, even if you are no better, she suggests that the freer ventilation of the lower apartments will be much better for your head than the close confined air of this small room."

"Return my grateful acknowledgments to Mrs. Butler, for her kind inquiries and anxiety for my health, and assure her that for the tenth wonder of the world, to please myself, I will act upon the spirit of her suggestions."

"And Henry sent his most respectful compliments, saying if you wanted him to furnish a Moorish knight casqued and plumed, you must help him entertain Mrs.

Adams until the conquering hero has bowed the knee."

"And Mr. Dwight—"

A tap upon the door interrupted her, and upon opening it, Miss Julia appeared with the anxious inquiries of her mamma for her dear Miss Graham.

Jessie's toilet was soon completed, and she accompanied Emma and Miss Adams to the saloon, where they found the company entranced by the bewitching tones of an enchanting musician. When the last sound of harmony had died upon the ear, and the listeners had waited still to catch another strain, but were disappointed by the lady's rising from the piano, Mr. Butler came forward, and with *empressment* sufficient for a special recommendation, presented "Mr. Carlton of New York" to "Miss Graham."

Jessie, full of the remembrance of her childhood's friends, immediately made room for him beside her; and Mr. and Mrs. Butler exchanged looks of satisfaction.

It was not long after he was seated, before Jessie introduced some inquiry for her 'West-Indian friends,' and the subject once started, it was one of which neither would soon weary. Mutual friends created mutual sympathy; and Carlton forgot the cold politeness with which he had decided to treat the warm-hearted girl by his side. And she knew not that her agreeable companion was the "bug-bear Tom" of her imagination. She inquired for Mr. and Mrs. Belmont, for Mrs. Lacey, and could not ask enough questions about Miss Belmont, and several times forgot the designation prescribed by etiquette, and named her as "dear Bel." Carlton did not notice the omission, but perhaps conversed less freely of Isabella than of the others; but he did notice that she did not name Mr. Frederick Belmont.

"Young Mr. Belmont," said he, "accompanied me to the United States, and but left here, in company with some English friends, this evening—did he leave home so early, that he has been forgotten by you?"

"Ah, Isabella's brother," returned Jessie, with charming *naïveté*, "he did leave home quite young—But you have not told me whether Miss Belmont realizes the promise of her youth, superior beauty?"

Ah, woman! woman! is there one among ye above the subterfuge of petty tact? Jessie's thoughts were at that moment far from the contemplation of her friend's personal charms, but instinctively she knew that the image of the sister would drive the brother from her companion's mind.

Carlton, in answer to her inquiry, was eloquent in his description of Isabella's loveliness, and if Mr. Burton could have seen and not heard the conversation, he

would have been assured of the realization of his schemes and dreams, and the success of his manœuvres.

And if—

But all the happiness and despair in life, to human perception, turn upon the single pivot of that little word.

If—we all might have enjoyed the bliss of purity and innocence,—and if—every hope had been beyond the reach of humanity.

The evening passed happily to each of our pleasure-seekers, with the exception of Mr. Dwight. The fair Julia and her more lovely mamma could not chase the cloud from his brow, and Emma declared that he “must have found and appropriated Jessie’s cast-off mantle of sullens!”

### CHAPTER XIII.

CARLTON had left the sunny isle of the tropical ocean, with saddened and desolate feelings. His love for Isabella was hopeless, for he was too honorable or proud to ask for the affections of one so far above him in the “cash valuation” of worth; and the brilliancy of her personal graces, joined with the superiority of her virtues, but made him the more diffident. His words had ever been carefully guarded, but the language of his eyes and the expression of his countenance were, perhaps, beyond his power of control.

He loved deeply and devotedly; but it was a proud and manly passion, which did not whimper like a schoolboy, because it could not possess the object of its desire.

It might be his misfortune that he could not command his admiration within the bounds of cold, reasonable prudence; and it would have been his fault, had he permitted it to enervate the powers of his mind, or detract from the dignity of his manhood.

True passion elevates, refines, and strengthens the noble and generous-hearted. It arouses the slumbering energies of the soul; purifies the desires, and exalts the perceptions of truth, justice, and benevolence.

We cannot love one intensely, truly, and purely, without feeling a deeper bond of brotherhood, and more abiding charity, for the whole race.

Carlton’s deep love for Isabella but excited warmer sympathies for other friends, and when he and young Belmont embarked for the United States, he took passage for the port nearest Mr. Burton’s residence; and immediately upon landing, hastened to pay his love and duty to his foster-father, leaving Belmont to pursue his journey alone to New York city, where Carlton promised to rejoin him.

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Mr. Burton’s delight in again meeting the child of his affections, may easily be conceived; and his welcome was as hearty as sincere.

“Well, Tom,” said he, the next morning after Carlton’s arrival, “I hope you have not forgotten that I have a niece, although you manifest but little curiosity about her welfare.”

“In my pleasure in again seeing you, sir, I must confess I had almost forgotten Miss Graham, but I trust she is well.”

“Miss Graham!” repeated Mr. Burton, in astonishment, “pray where did you learn her family name?”

“During the past winter, I have often heard her named; but as I almost ever figured beside her as ‘bugbear Tom,’ I will frankly acknowledge that I did not lay claim to the appellation by confessing my identity.”

“What, ashamed of me, sir? ashamed to own your father’s friend, and the protector of your own infancy?”

“No, no,” returned Carlton, warmly; “you know that your words do me injustice; and that I but shrank from figuring as the hero of a past romance.”

“It’s no past romance, sir,” continued the old man, but little appeased by the appealing tone of his foster-son, “and you need not shrink from being known as the affianced of Jessie Graham.”

“A man of honor will shrink as quick from acting a falsehood, as asserting one.”

“What do you mean, sir?”

“To reiterate, if necessary, what I have ever written you—that your niece never can be to me as you wish—she as little desires it as I do.”

“Fools! you don’t either of you know what you want. You have never seen Jessie, nor she you—if it could have been as I planned—but now you know that Jessie Graham is the one to avoid—botheration! I wish your grandmother—”

“I do not see what connection that lady has with your wishes, as she died before my birth.”

“Pshaw! let me think.”

The old man was a little out of his longitude, and, in the warmth of his feelings, forgot that he was not talking to Jessie.

“Tom,” pursued Mr. Burton, after a minute’s pause, “your going to the West Indies has spoiled my plans, and I must trust to your honor.”

Carlton’s visit to the West Indies had marred the old gentleman’s “plans,” in more respects than one; but of the worst feature in the spoiling of his romance, happily he still remained ignorant, and continued: “Were not Jessie all that a reasonable man could ask for a wife, I would not insist upon the matter—but she



is generous, affectionate, kind, with more sense than beauty, which makes her a little willful, perhaps; but spirit should be no objection; I hate tame women. To be sure, she is no housekeeper; but that's because I didn't know how to make her one, as your grandmother was dead. But she is all a man could want for a wife, only she will want some taming, which will come natural enough in married life. To sum up the whole, she is good, but not handsome; kindhearted, but a little vixen when her temper is up; just the woman for a wife, but no housekeeper."

Carlton could not keep a grave countenance at the enumeration of Jessie's wifely qualities: for they reminded him of the Yankee extravaganza, where the old woman recounted the good deeds she had performed towards her neighbor:—"I gave her some chairs *tu, jest* as good as *nu*; second-handed, to be sure, and hadn't but three legs, but *jest* as good as *nu*."

"What are you laughing at, you young dog?" asked the old man, heating into a passion.

"Not at Miss Graham, I assure you, my dear sir," returned Carlton, "although you have classified her merits and demerits in rather questionable order."

"What is that to you?" interrupted the old gentleman. "I don't want you to suppose her a 'piece of perfection, such as the world never saw; she is a good piece of flesh and blood, perfect as a woman can be, and good enough for a wife."

"I am not disposed to cavil the point," interrupted Carlton, "but, as I have before assured you, were she an angel she could not be my wife."

"Why, sir; you are not married, not engaged, are you?"

"Neither, my dear sir, and I beg the point may not be pressed further."

"Who is going to press you? who is going to compel you? can there be any harm in seeing a lively young lady without telling her that you are the scarecrow of her imagination? But there is no gratitude, no affection in the world now, and you both are bent upon opposing me, merely because you know it would gratify an old man to see his two children happy."

"Tax my affection and gratitude upon some other subject," returned Carlton, his voice far from being steady with emotion, "and see if I fail you."

"Ah! there it is! ask you to give up your top or tin whistle, and you are all obedience and affection. But I ask no sacrifice—do as you will—but you either take Jessie Graham for a wife, or you never touch a stiver of my property."

"I have before assured you, that I do not ask for any of your property; and your holding that up as an inducement,

would only be a stronger argument for never thinking of your niece as a wife. In the heart's exchange, mercenary motives could not tempt me."

"Pshaw! Tom, you are too much of a man to dream of love in a cottage."

"It is a subject of mere dreams to me," interrupted Carlton, "and the dreams are as agreeable in a cottage as in a palace hall."

"Dreams may do there, sir; but you will find the reality will not be as pleasant—marry Jessie, and all I have is yours. You two are my children, and what I should give one, would be robbing the other, unless your interests are the same."

"And were we your children by ties of consanguinity, would the same arrangement be indispensable for your happiness?" asked Carlton, smiling.

"Well, well," returned the old gentleman, a little puzzled by Carlton's home question, "I suppose then you could not marry; but now you can, if you would only love each other. I had arranged," he continued, "to have you and Jessie meet without knowing that you were each other's antipathy; but that is spoiled. But Jessie knows you not, will you seek her acquaintance and not tell her who you are?"

"It would be useless," Carlton commenced.

"But it could do you no harm," interrupted the old man, passionately. "You are pledged to nothing; you need not marry her without you woo her as a stranger; am I so little to you, that you will refuse me so poor a request?"

"But you, father, will misconstrue my intention," replied Carlton, moved by the passionate tone of entreaty which the old gentleman had assumed.

"No, no; I'll set it down that you have no intentions, and will promise never again to urge the subject; if you will be an obstinate dunce, remain so—will you promise?"

"Upon such conditions—but," began Carlton.

"My boy! my own boy!" exclaimed the old gentleman.

"But—" interposed Carlton.

"But! none of your buts—you have promised to see Jessie without informing her that you are the *ci-devant* Master Tom Burton, and let the matter take its own course."

"And I am not to be farther urged upon the subject, after the acquaintance," added Carlton.

"I have promised it," returned Mr. Burton, "but I had ought to have added, not until you ask my consent."

"No, I will not have any provisos added to the original agreement," said Carlton, laughing, delighted to see Mr. Burton

good-humor restored, "and therefore I consider the subject of contention silenced forever."

"We'll see, we'll see," returned Mr. Burton, perfectly assured of realizing the consummation of all his plans. For the old gentleman, in the warmth of his affections, firmly believed both of his foster children irresistible, and perforce, they had but to meet, to love even as he wished.

And thus the dispute was ended, the estrangement forgotten, and Tom was his own dear boy again.

Time would reveal which was the strongest—the old man's schemes, or the young man's hopeless love. Both were equally certain that there could not be any unanticipated change;—the one was assured that he should ever worship the present idol of his heart; the other, that Thomas Carlton and Jessie Graham were made for each other, hence it was not in the power of their willful fancies to change the designs of their creation.

They were both certain of—a doubt, at best; and the young man's position was perchance as wild as the old man's. Let the young or old get a crotchet in their brain, and they are both sure of its truth and reality.

To combat a man's prejudices, no matter whether in love, religion, or the philosophy of life, is a greater folly than to fight a windmill giant. Most men could as soon be convinced that they could change the features of their faces, as their preconceived opinions. They can advance sufficient reasons why they should believe as they do, but could hardly imagine a cause why they should change without the supposition of impossible contingencies. And yet, they all know that change is inscribed upon every human emotion and hope!

But Carlton, certain of himself, assured of his own honorable intentions, had no fear of meeting Jessie, save from what misconstruction Mr. Burton might conceive; and with that one fear silenced, he had no more to avoid or fly from. But the bond of his promise bound him to leave Jessie "to fall in love"—if she could not help it.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

They met at Saratoga, as recorded in a previous chapter, where mutual friends of whom they delighted to converse, a dissimilarity of tastes, which gives a greater zest and more piquancy to conversation than a perfect similarity of sentiments, Jessie's desire to escape all attentions from Mr. Dwight, and, it must be confessed, a mutual pleasure in each other's society, often drew them together.

Mr. and Mrs. Butler were delighted with the apparent progress of their commission; Emma was too happy to surmise others' preferences; Mrs. Adams and Miss Julia were busy in improving their own time of making conquests; and of all our party, Mr. Dwight alone was uneasy and dispirited. Yet, he might have been happy in one of his favorite philosophical researches, natural history, if he would have but fancied the great saloon a menagerie filled with a curious collection of living animals. For happiness does not consist so much in the possession of the objects of chimerical desires, as in improving the means within our reach of amusement.

Jessie entered upon the pleasures and duties of the place, with a freshness of feeling captivating to the jaded pleasure-seeker of many seasons. She drank the unpalatable waters with a merry laugh, rode, danced, and walked as though each of the acts was something new or delightful.

Carlton, by common consent, was almost ever her cavalier attendant, and through him, Henry, and Mrs. Adams, she received more general introductions than Mr. or Mrs. Butler would have approved, if they had always been solicited to have acted as masters of ceremonies.

And her acquaintance was none the less sought, by a rumor generally credited, set afloat by some supposition repeated as a fact, or by a mischief-vender for his own amusement, that she was an orphan heiress of great wealth.

Mr. Butler was adroitly questioned of her relatives and possessions, and his not very lucid replies but the more confirmed the tale.

And thus, without knowing why, and more surprised than her friends, she awoke one morning and found herself—not a "lion"—but something very like a belle, with a "diploma," if not from nature, from the popular voice of a fashionable watering-place, to "make herself a dunce with all éclat and credit."

Henry and Carlton both knew of the rumor, but neither of them corrected it. Carlton could not without betraying previous knowledge of Miss Graham, and that would have infringed upon his contract of honor with Mr. Burton. Henry would not, and only replied to his interrogator, that "the least said upon the subject the better, for were her old curmudgeon of a guardian to hear a hint of the affair, she would instantly be recalled to her former seclusion."

Fortunately, or unfortunately, Mrs. Adams could not enlighten the public upon the question, as she had never been able to ascertain from her not very skillful cross-questionings whether Jessie origin

ally dropped from the moon, or grew up like a mushroom, in some shady corner of the earth. And from aught she could positively assert to the contrary, Jessie might hold in fee simple all right and title to both places, but she "*thought not.*"

Had Jessie been aware of the rumor, she might not have felt so flattered that all the attentions she received were tributes to her personal attractions. But half of the pleasure in life consists in not knowing too much. Were we all in a "Palace of Truth," alas! for the self-congratulation of the vain or wise, serious or simple.

Emma and Jessie usually visited the springs very early in the morning, attended only by Mr. and Mrs. Butler, and sometimes only the former; as the drinking of the waters is as necessary a duty to the pleasure-seeker as to the valetudinarian; and Jessie affirmed that an unnecessary duty had ought to be performed first, lest it be forgotten or crowded out of the items of acts. Henry declared that their matutinal walks were only to prevent their admirers from seeing what horrid grimaces they could make at unpleasant tastes. Mrs. Butler drank the waters with the same air of propriety which ever characterized her in the performance of all her duties; and Mrs. Adams sipped them from morn until night, in hopes, as Henry said, that their hidden virtues would perpetuate eternal youth.

When rallied upon their early visits to the springs—"Order," said Jessie, "is necessary to find time to live, and not be wearied with fatigue. Our mornings we devote to our healths, the day to dressing for and eating our dinners—and the evenings—shall I enumerate?—dancing, moralizing, listening to elaborate compliments, and, like the bee, extracting sweets from everything not devoid of honey."

"And, miss," said an old gentleman, who was quietly listening to the explanation, "where do you not find sweet to reward your toil, do you leave a sting in revenge for labor lost?"

"If the bee stings worthless weeds and insensible wood," returned Jessie, "I believe no naturalist has been able to explain how pain can be suffered in absence of sensation."

"But some weeds, if they yield no sweet, have poisonous qualities—"

"Which the instinct of the bee avoids," interrupted Jessie. "But, order—I only moralize in the evening by moonlight."

"A butterfly instead of the wise little bee," muttered the old man.

"Thank you, thank you!" gaily responded the light-hearted girl; "butterflies are in keeping here—the wise little bee would make all the ladies faint, and the gentlemen flee. But order—this evening, my dear sir, if you will permit and bear my

company, I will moralize, learn wisdom, study the natural history of insects, and—"

"Draw all the buzzards in the house about me," returned the old misanthrope.

"So much the better—my lesson can profit more than one—and I do so love to do good," said Jessie, with a merry laugh, which, in spite of his sour visage, warmed the old man's heart.

"A pity! a pity," murmured he, as she left him—"she does not know it, but she is worthy of something better than to be one of these senseless butterflies," and his eye followed her as she glided along amid the gay, fashionable crowd.

The next morning the old gentleman was at the spring and anticipated Henry's services in proffering the young ladies their morning draught.

"A thousand thanks, kind sir," said Jessie, with a smile, as she received the proffered glass. "You excused yourself from teaching me wisdom last evening, and I suspect, thought to find me remiss in one of my duties this morning."

"I should have as soon anticipated that the birds would have forgotten their morning carol, as your neglecting to preserve your health and roses by tasting the pure morning air."

"Out of order," returned Jessie, gaily, "you have forgotten—I only listen to compliments in the evening."

"Not a compliment, miss, but a comment upon your vanity," returned the old man. "Nay," continued he, "don't open your eyes so inquiringly—you well know it is not love of exercise nor the taste of these nauseating waters which rouse you from your bed—But you know you cannot sleep half the day, and sparkle as brightly without exercise as with it—and you—"

"No one, but your own fair self, Miss Graham," said "the most splendid man at the springs," advancing and addressing Jessie, "could have extracted even as questionable a compliment as that, from a cynic in Paradise."

"And Mordecai the Jew sat at the king's gate and did him no homage," responded the old man, turning and leaving the party to drink or walk, as might suit their pleasure.

"And what punishment is your due, Mr. Ware," asked Jessie, "for driving away my cavalier? His age, at least, deserves respect—and it is my desire to impart to him some of my own happiness, and thus cure him of what you would call his cynicism."

"I shall claim a reward rather than a punishment," returned Mr. Ware, bowing.

"Presumption!" responded Jessie, "the whole world think they do right and deserve a reward, if they please themselves—I had thought you too generous to even claim a reward for a noble and disinterested action."

"With the whole world, I must plead guilty to selfishness, and admiration of Miss Graham," quickly returned Mr. Ware.

"Fudge! as the man in the Vicar of Wakefield says—you must plead second to the cynic in flattering as well as in snarling," returned Jessie, petulantly. "But I will not listen to compliments before breakfast; my physician expressly forbids it." And she hastened her pace to join Henry and Emma, who were a short distance before them.

"Will you listen for a few moments to truth?" asked Mr. Ware, in a frank and manly tone.

"If I would, I must seek the growler, for he is the only man I have heard speak three connected sentences of truth since my arrival at Saratoga."

"You forget Mr. Carlton," remarked Mr. Ware sarcastically, yet in a modulated tone of gentleness.

"Of course, I except the members of our own party."

"And your own lover?"

"Sir?" responded Jessie haughtily, pausing and looking into his face, as if to read truly his meaning.

Mr. Ware's point was gained. Jessie had walked so fast that they had nearly overtook Emma and Henry, and as they were following one of the serpentine walks through a grove, a moment's pause and a sudden turning would take them out of sight.

"Pardon me, Miss Graham," he continued, as he met her look of hauteur, "I intended no offence, and you cannot be ignorant that common rumor assigns Mr. Carlton the honor of your regard."

"I am not in the habit of listening to idle gossip, or regulating my regard by the fiat of popular voice," returned Jessie, proudly.

"Miss Graham, I acknowledge my offence—be merciful and forgive—were it not for exposing you to gossiping eyes, I would kneel and not rise until you had pronounced my pardon."

This speech recalled Jessie to the consideration, that a public promenade was not the most proper place for a scene.

"Do not add folly to folly—I am in an error to be angry with a fashionable man before breakfast, as it is not to be supposed such are anything but dreaming until that hour."

"I could wish that my life might pass in the dream, were I certain that I could retain your sweet companionship."

"Permit me to say good morning," returned Jessie, bowing; "I have a perfect horror of somnambulists."

Mr. Ware bit his lips with vexation at the bearish humor of his whimsical companion. He had hoped to find a dove, but had more nearly caught a porcupine. A

man must have a strong motive, who would venture upon even the outskirts of a tender declaration at early morn, or all novelists and poets are in fault.

We know not why the "rising sun" is denied the honor of witnessing lover's vows any more than "sunset's hour," "dewy eve," and the "moon's pale beams;" but by universal consent and suffrage early morning has been avoided as not propitious to the lover's tale. Perchance, the head is too clear at an early hour, and the judgment preponderates over the imagination—that it requires the senses dulled by the fatigue of the day to give sufficient credulity, and inspire faith in protestations which may be broken and forgotten.

We are no caviller at man's faith and love. His vows may be as sincere, and his truth as pure, as that witnessed by the tremulous throb which first thrills a maiden's heart—but who can or dare answer that he will know no more change till death! And yet, the words are spoken, the vow uttered, and woman won. Then come the cares of life, its strife, and its fevered ambition—will not these strangle the freshness of feeling, and destroy the purity of early truth!

Mr. Ware followed Jessie silently until she reached the turn where Emma and Henry had disappeared, and as she paused irresolute which path to pursue,

"Pardon me, Miss Graham," said he, "I have detained you unwittingly until we have lost sight of your friends; permit my protection and escort until we can rejoin them—I think they passed this way."

Mr. Ware certainly had a very treacherous memory, for not three minutes had elapsed since he saw them turn into the opposite path. Without further comment, they pursued the direction which Mr. Ware suggested. He made no farther reference to his offence, but adroitly introduced an interesting and agreeable subject, and by the frankness of his manner, the originality of his thoughts, and the earnest eloquence of his language, soon charmed Jessie into forgetfulness of her irritation, and gradually drew her into conversation.

Jessie was quick to take offence, easily irritated, and perhaps angry at the very thing which, in another humor, would have excited her mirth; but she was as easily soothed, and more disposed to censure her own warmth of temper than attribute a wrong intention to others. Her very virtues were strangely like faults—and in her errors was the secret of her safety. Had she been more amiable, her trust, charity, and kindness of heart would have made her an easy prey to the crafty and designing; and had she possessed but an iota more of temper, she would have been an intolerable vixen, for whom there could have been no danger

Mr. Ware did not again venture upon his hyperbole of compliment, but proved that he had the power to entertain by the varied intelligence of sensible conversation. The breakfast summons recalled them to the hotel, and their animated countenances, glowing with exercise and sparkling with pleasure as they entered the breakfast room, might have been attributed to a more exhilarating subject of discourse than the one which they had been discussing.

This was Jessie's first lapse from Mrs. Butler's rules, after their arrival at Saratoga; and that good lady improved the first moment after they rose from the table to execute her ministerial function of reproof and advice.

Jessie, with mock penitence, assured her that the fault was all Emma's, and that she had been wandering the whole morning in seeking the truant lovers, not daring to return until she had found them. And that from motives of humanity Mr. Ware had joined her in the search, for which he was entitled to the thanks of all their anxious friends.

"But, Miss Graham," commenced Mrs. Butler, "this is no trifling subject—I must—"

"Surely not," interrupted Jessie, "you cannot imagine the horror of my feelings when I found they were missing—I was speechless in the depth of my emotions—and seriously assure you that I did not lose sight of them from any neglect, or want of the most watchful and motherly care."

"Miss Graham!"

"Has told you the truth, madam; it was no fault of hers that she lost sight of her friends," interposed the cynic. For the reproof had been given in one of Mrs. Butler's asides in the public saloon. She thought no one near, and her voice and manner were the most proper under-tone, when not wishing to attract observation and annoy others by mere general inquiries.

Jessie gave the old, sour philosopher an eloquent look of thanks, and the next moment blushed that he, as she was assured from his manner, had witnessed her vexation and subsequent interest in her companion.

"Do not be annoyed, my young lady," continued the old man, instantly divining her thoughts; "for to repay the gentleman's complimentary remarks of myself, I doubt whether any other person beside yourself, could have tempted or compelled the most fascinating man at the Springs to have talked sense two hours, without one sentence of fulsome flattery or sickening vanity."

"I have told you," replied Jessie, with a smile, "that I never listen to compliments until evening; and I must add that my vanity must not be excited at the expense

of others—but I thank you," she added in a low tone, "for your kind interference."

"Then remember," rejoined the old man "that a serpent may be wise, but he remains a serpent still."

Mrs. Butler perceived there was some mystery in the matter, but she could not hope for a solution from Jessie, and propriety forbade her seeking information from another. But the cynic was a man whose slightest praise was received far more than met the ear, and she did not again renew the subject.

The next morning both Mr. and Mrs. Butler accompanied the young ladies on their morning walk; and, although they met both Mr. Ware and the old cynic, neither of the gentlemen evinced any desire to join the party, and passed with only the salutations of common courtesy.

In the evening Mr. Cabell arrived from West Point, and was greeted by a warm welcome from all the party, save Mr. Dwight and Mrs. Butler.

"I could not wait," said the young man "until winter to meet you again, therefore pleaded ill health, for which there is no panacea but the waters of Saratoga."

Mrs. Adams and Miss Julia were delighted with the acquisition of his company, as the mother knew him to be the only son of one of the oldest and wealthiest families in his native state.

The arrival of Mr. Cabell somewhat interrupted Carlton's constant attendance upon Jessie, and excited a doubt in Mr. Dwight's mind whether the latter gentleman would ever succeed Mr. Butler in the guardianship of his willful ward. This doubt excited hope or desperation, and he dismissed the philosopher, and again appeared animated with feelings of man among his kind.

"Will you ride with me to-morrow?" he asked Jessie one evening. "Yesterday Mr. Carlton was your attendant—to-day Mr. Cabell—and will you not honor me with your company to-morrow?"

"Not to-morrow," replied Jessie, archly: "to-morrow I accompany Mr. Ware, and must, therefore, plead a preengagement."

"Am I the only one of your friends upon whom you can never find time to smile?"

"Oh, no," returned the laughing girl; "I can laugh at you by the hour if you will—but why is this? I had numbered you among my deceased attendants."

"I would not press my attentions upon any one; and since we arrived at this gay place, you have hardly found time to remember your old friends."

"I never forget any of them."

"But a new one is dearer than old ones?"

"Which one! for among the many who have sought to amuse me, I cannot say to whom I am the most grateful."

"Does not your heart answer the question?"

"My heart! why I left it at home, safely rolled up in a napkin, and gave Chole positive orders to air it every day."

"And to whom will Chole have orders to deliver it on your return?"

"It is impossible for me to answer, as I have not had any application for the article; besides, this is a market for anything but hearts."

"True; but I had supposed for several days past Mr. Carlton the favorite bidder."

"My heart will not be disposed of at auction," returned Jessie with a frown, "and I am much mistaken if Mr. Carlton has not as much of the article as he desires—or at least could not pay the price for mine."

"Why so?"

"I am wanting in woman's observation, if Mr. Carlton's heart's question was not decided before I ever saw him."

"And yet he is your constant—"

"Jessie," said Emma, approaching. "Pardon me, Mr. Dwight," she continued, as she noticed who was Jessie's companion, "but Jessie, Henry, and Mr. Carlton are waiting, and I must deprive Mr. Dwight of your society, unless he will accompany us. Mrs. Adams and Miss Julia are of the party."

"And as I am otherwise engaged," replied Mr. Dwight, "I must decline the pleasure of a walk this evening." The enumeration of Mrs. Adams and Miss Julia was the cause of his excuse, for Jessie's last words had inspired a stronger hope in his breast than before he had dared indulge, and he was in no mood to play the philosopher, or general gallant. If Carlton was not loved, his chance of success was equal with Mr. Cabell, and he hoped.

And who in love does not hope, even amid the darkest doubts? Love is the grand leveller—the student hath no prerogative above the plough-boy in the hopes and fears which agitate the human heart.

There was no great danger that Mr. Dwight's fancy (for I cannot give it a more dignified name) would be the cause of any great evil or unhappiness to his future life; for his judgment, popular voice would have said, ruled his imagination and affections. His safety was rather in natural coldness of temperament, and an intellect squared into the rules of reason and logic. His hopes were not ardent, nor would their overthrow be very bitter. His sense of duty had kept him from any declaration of his feelings, for it would be wrong to interfere in any previous family arrangement; but that disposed of by the defalcation of one of the party's affections, a sense of justice to himself, would induce him to declare his claim, and if it was rejected—But the rejection from any motive but af-

fections previously engaged, or Mr. Burton's claim for his adopted son, never entered his mind; as he, like all reasonable men, had a very just estimation of his own merits.

If Carlton did not want Jessie, he did; and his right was on a par with Mr. Cabell's or any other applicant. And poor Jessie was but the commodity to be grateful, and say "yes, sir," to any honorable man who might be disposed to offer her the honor of wearing his name.

Of all animals, a reasonable lover is the most provoking to a high-spirited, independent woman. And as far as my observation has extended, I have never known any very great happiness to result from one of these reasonable, prudent marriage contracts. Perhaps the parties may have avoided the very depths of misery, as their bargain especially provided for the *et ceteras* of physical comfort; but the blind god flies from prudential considerations, as he would from a banquet of *crackers and cheese*!

## CHAPTER XV.

AMONG the gay and glittering throng which congregate annually at Saratoga, sorrow also hath its victims, and the stricken seek the waters of its celebrated pools in the hopes of again finding a bloom for the faded cheek, and strength for the weakened frame.

As our pedestrians reached the brow of one of the hills which add variety to the beauty of the scenery, both Carlton and Jessie noticed the grief-worn countenance of a woman, who quickly passed them, returning towards the village. The expression of grievous woe imprinted upon that face; was not to be forgotten, and both paused involuntarily and gazed after the retreating form, for whose sorrows even a passing glance had excited their commiseration.

A short distance beyond them, the woman turned from the frequented walk, and crossing into the shadow of the thicket, leaned her head against a tree, and abandoned herself to the most convulsive agony. She evidently thought she was screened from passers' observation, as in a direct line from the path-way two or three large trees intervened and obstructed the view. But as Carlton and Jessie were standing at an angle from the place, they could witness every movement, and almost see the palpitations of the throbbing heart as it rose and fell beneath the folds of her handkerchief.

The stranger's dress bespoke one from the humblest walks in life, where economy must be consulted at the expense of taste and fashion. But it was scrupulously

neat, and the arrangement of every fold exhibited a mind alive to order, rather than grace.

Jessie unclasped her hand from Carlton's arm, and was instinctively rushing forward to soothe or relieve the grief which had aroused her sympathy, when Carlton detained her.

"Stay," said he, "let this passionate outbreak remain sacred—we will pass around by the gate, and when she returns to the open pathway, we can meet and accost her, should you then wish it."

"No, no! not you—she would shrink from and fear you—but to one of her own sex, she might reveal the cause of her anguish."

"Perhaps you are right," returned Carlton, "but do not interrupt this outbreak of nature—she will become calm sooner alone than even with sympathy—see," said he, as the woman clasped her hands and raised her head, as if in supplication for strength from Almighty power, "the paroxysm is passed, and she now implores relief from a source which cannot fail—come, that she may not observe us." And he quickly conducted the weeping girl on his arm in the direction which he had pointed out as the most likely to intercept the sorrowing stranger.

"Let me entreat you to be calm, Miss Graham," he continued—"these tears bespeak a heart warmed by the liveliest sympathy, but I fear your emotion will pain the object of your pity by betraying that her agony had witnesses."

"Thank you, thank you," murmured Jessie, in a voice broken by her sobs, "but you must leave me to address the stranger alone."

"When I see her approaching, I will retire, and wait until you have executed the benevolent promptings of your heart. But I must pray your forgiveness for my past injustice—I had deemed you one of the gay, heartless. I will not say; but one of those who, in the fullness of their own enjoyment, forget the sufferings and misery which surrounds them."

"You have had no cause to think otherwise," replied Jessie humbly—"but she approaches"—and she dropped Carlton's arm and hastened forward to meet the grief-stricken object of her sympathy.

Carlton had spoken of his injustice as much to change the current of her thoughts from the too vivid contemplation of the stranger's anguish, as to acknowledge his error. And, perchance, the half implied praise, which his confession conveyed, but the more elevated Jessie's feelings into that sympathy which not only feels, but acts.

The woman hastened along the walk with downcast eyes, and did not notice Jessie's approach until she arrested her

attention by laying her hand gently on her arm.

"You are in sorrow," said she; "can a stranger's sympathy relieve your cares or soothe your grief?"

Deep feeling had modulated the excited girl's tone to one of deep pathos, which even without the words (for the stranger had caught them but imperfectly) betokened the sincerity of the speaker.

The woman started as Jessie's hand arrested her progress, and turned an inquiring look upon the richly dressed girl by her side.

"You are too young and happy, miss," she replied, "to understand the weary cares of want, pain, and sickness."

"Not too young," returned Jessie, "to feel for others' cares, although, thus far in life, I have been shielded from their blight."

"I was wrong, wrong," murmured the woman, "I repined that others, gay and happy like yourself, were shielded from the bitterness of poverty, while I was alone, watching the departing strength of one but the more loved for his sufferings. It seemed that amid the whole multitude, I alone was taxed beyond the power of endurance."

"The sympathy of friends can alleviate the poignancy of our sorrows."

"Friends!" repeated the woman quickly. "Oh, yes, were I at home, one half the bitterness of this hour could not be."

"You are a stranger here?" asked Jessie.

"Yes; and yours is the first voice of sympathy and kindness which I have heard. The people where I stop may be kind; but they have a house full of boarders, and have no time to more than inquire how my husband has rested; and the doctor's visits are brief, and he only asks how the symptoms have been, and gives the necessary orders about the medicine."

"Is your husband very ill?"

"Beyond hope," replied the woman, "but I have been away too long and must hasten back—the chamber-maid promised to watch while I was out. But—miss, I thank you for your kindly sympathy—but I must not delay my return."

"Permit me to accompany you—you look worn out with watching—perhaps I can yield you assistance."

"Oh, no; not you—you look more fitted for a ball-room, than the nurse of a sick chamber." Even amid the wretchedness of her sorrows, she had, with woman's instinctive vanity, noticed the elegant attire of the kind-hearted girl by her side; and perhaps, with a distrust too prevalent among those less favored in the means to adorn the body and pamper the appetite, classed an elegant toilet with a careless and unmindful heart.

"But let me go with you, and see where you are staying, and how your husband has been during your absence," returned Jessie.

"I thank you!" said the stranger, in a voice less steady than it had been during their short colloquy; "you are very kind."

Jessie turned and accompanied her in silence, allowing her time to subdue her emotion, before she ventured upon further inquiries into her situation; for with the instinct of benevolence, she divined that pressing want was added to the hopeless illness of the husband, and to the stranger's list of cares and griefs; and of this, she thought she could judge better by seeing the condition of the invalid, than by the walking dress of the wife. For the appearance of the woman, although very plain and ordinary, was comfortable; and its lack of finish and taste might as much result from a want of knowledge of modes as from want of means.

The woman led the way to one of the cheapest boarding-houses, where the price is graduated by inches instead of comforts, and where the least room and least air, as in larger houses, cost the less; and passing up a narrow staircase, opened the door of a small, close room, with only one window, and that so situated that, from the dimensions of the apartment, it could not be opened without exposing the occupant of the bed to the full current of air.

"Ah, and I am glad ye've come—the mistress has been after me, and after me," said the servant, starting from the chair which she occupied at the head of the sick man's bed.

The invalid turned wearily; "Have you got it?" he asked, in the impatient tones of nervous irritation.

"I hope, ma'am, ye've brought the letter—it will do him more good than all the doctor's medicines," said the kind-hearted servant, as she was closing the door.

"A lady has come to see you, David," said the wife, approaching the bed, and arranging the clothes, which had been displaced by the restlessness of the invalid.

"Thank you, miss," said the sick man, looking up at his young visitor and reaching out his trembling hand.

"How do you find yourself, my friend?" said Jessie, taking the emaciated hand between both of hers.

"Badly, badly," returned the invalid; "oh, it is bitter to die among strangers."

"We will hope that your health may be restored, and you yet be enabled to return to your home," said Jessie, endeavoring to speak cheerfully and hopefully, although it required no very practised observation to see that the man's days were numbered.

"No, I can't hope that: but I would try and be resigned if I could again hear

from my children—I know there is a letter at the Post Office, and, Mary, how could you be so cruel as not to get it?"

"How should you know, David, there was a letter there? don't you think I should be as glad as you to hear from our children?"

"Yes, yes; forgive me, Mary, but I am so anxious I can't be reasonable—and I am afraid I shall be gone before it gets here—They have never delayed before."

The wife turned with a look of unutterable pain from the bedside, and bent over the table as if arranging the vials and papers with which it was covered. But Jessie had caught a glance at her face, and saw that her employment was but to conceal her flowing tears. During the latter part of their walk, Jessie had learned from the replies of the wife as to the illness of her husband, that the year before he had suffered from a chill bilious fever, which had left him prostrated almost to helplessness; but in the spring his strength had rallied, and travel, with a visit to the springs, had been recommended as a farther restorative to his weakened frame. He had borne the journey better than anticipated, and the first weeks after his arrival apparently improved. And then he was taken worse and declined rapidly, and now it was nearly four weeks since he had been out of the house, and for one week confined to his bed. But she had not learned their names, nor place of residence; and more to soothe the sick man's nervousness than from aught else, she remarked,

"The mails are very irregular—probably it is no fault of your children that you have not received your expected letter, how far have your letters to come?"

"From Michigan—"

"Oh, I have often heard it remarked that the mails were very irregular at the west—and it is a long way there; perhaps to-morrow may be more fortunate. But my friends may be anxious at my absence: I must go now. But if you will allow me," she continued, addressing the wife, "I will return and remain with you to-night—you will be worn out by your constant watching."

"I get along very well—Margaret is very kind, and has sat an hour after the others were in bed, and let me sleep twice this week, and I would not like to trouble you."

"But Margaret must be fatigued when her work is done, and if you will trust me with the care, I shall come."

"Oh, I could trust you with the care but—"

"Do not raise any more objections," returned Jessie, cheerfully, "I did not know but you thought me too young and giddy to be trusted to watch—"



"But," interposed the woman, "I—you—that—"

"Oh, I will come in a dress more fitted for a nurse," added Jessie, relieving the woman's embarrassment by divining the cause of her objections.

"Pardon me, miss, you have guessed what I would say. I didn't know as you would think of it."

"Get all your arrangements made," continued Jessie, "so that you can retire as soon as I come—"

"You are very kind—it will never be in my power to repay it, but—"

"Perhaps it will," interrupted Jessie, "at least, do not let the obligation distress you until you have incurred it. But I forget—what name shall I inquire for on my return?"

"Walker—"

"Well, good evening, Mrs. Walker, I shall see you again in an hour or two."

"How kind," said the wife, after returning from seeing Jessie to the door.

"Yes, and how handsome," returned the husband. "I hope she will come, for, I shall rest better if I can think you are sleeping, Mary—but why does not that letter come?" he continued, his thoughts instantly reverting to the one subject of anxiety.

The wife did not reply, for she knew why the letter had not arrived, or rather that it had arrived, but she had no means of obtaining it from the Post Office.

The previous history of Mr. and Mrs. Walker was commonplace. He was a small but thriving farmer, with but little surplus, save his own health and his wife's economy. His illness the year before had deprived him of the benefit of the more efficient part of his capital, his industry; and every nerve had been strained to furnish the means for prosecuting the journey from which so much was hoped. Their prolonged stay of months instead of the few weeks which they had anticipated, and the expenses necessarily attending his increased illness, had exhausted their money until but one shilling remained. But the husband knew it not, and the wife was delaying imparting to him an evil which he could not remedy, and the knowledge of which, she feared, might be attended by the most fatal consequences. That morning she had settled her monthly board bill, and the many little "extras," which the sick man had required, had swelled it several dollars more than she had anticipated; and she was vainly endeavoring to devise some method by which she might instruct her son to raise money and forward for their future expenses. But how? was the question. Before they started from home almost every sacrifice had been made to procure the means for their journey. Their little farm and one cow

was their whole remaining possessions. By encumbering the farm she would endanger the future home for her little ones. They had neighbors, who, were they at home, would perform every act of kindness and attention within their power; but it was a new settlement, where the people possessed much more hospitality and sympathy than money. They were all poor in that medium of exchange which can be forwarded in a letter, but rich in fertile lands, fast yielding to the husbandman's power and kindly attentions.

A son, a lad of sixteen, and a daughter of fourteen years of age had been left at home, with three younger children, and these would be but poor counsellors in extremity, however fervent might be their love.

And to increase her troubles, Mrs. Walker was in that state of doubt and indecision which increases every evil. She could not decide what to do without her husband's counsel, and she dare not, in his present weakened state, explain to him the circumstances. Even the delay of the letter irritated him, and increased his nervous debility. Once she had started to go down and ask her landlady to send for the letter, but she shrank back, dreading to incur an obligation which she had no means of liquidating, and the next board-bill—how could it be paid!

She had no resource, no friends to whom she could unfold the agony of her surcharged heart; no relief but the tears of a woman, and the prayers of a Christian—both powerful and irresistible—the one with men, the other with God.

Jessie had gone but a few paces from the door after parting with Mrs. Walker, before Carlton joined her.

"Have you been waiting for me?" said she; "if I had thought, I would not have remained so long."

"I would not have had you shorten your visit on my account," he replied; "my walk was as pleasant here as elsewhere; but tell me, have you discovered the cause of the woman's grief, and will it admit of amelioration?"

"Not much more than what sympathy for one with strangers can effect, I fear. It is evident her husband cannot live long, and our grief for the dead has no amelioration, but what time may bring."

"And you have mourned?"

"A father and mother; both within one week. I was young, but—" and she paused, without finishing the sentence.

"I, too, am an orphan," said Carlton; "but I do not remember either of my parents; my mother died a few hours after my birth, and my father—"

He paused, fearing that he was trespassing upon his engagement of honor with Mr. Burton; for, undoubtedly, Jessie was

perfectly familiar with his early history. But as her mind was preoccupied with the death scene of her parents, and the one of suffering which she had just left, she did not notice his abrupt pause, or attributed it to emotion.

"Do you think," he continued, after a short pause, "these people are in want of any pecuniary assistance?"

"I suspect they are," she replied, and related the wife's reply, and evident pain at her husband's anxiety and inquiry about the letter. Also entering into a detail of what she had noticed, and her own promise to sit with the sick man through the night.

"I cannot permit that," he remarked, in answer to her intention of watching with the sick man; "I will go as your substitute."

"Not to-night," returned Jessie, "I did not offer my services to send another. If I had, the power of money, undoubtedly, would easily find one to take my place."

"But Mrs. Butler will object to your arrangement; it will ill accord with her ideas of propriety, for a fashionable young lady to play the nurse."

"Then I will get you to plead my cause. Mrs. Butler never reproves me for any fault respecting which I can plead that you aided or abetted."

"Pardon me, Miss Graham, did I ever aid you in doing wrong?"

"Perhaps not: but if I had been out with any other gentleman, as I have with you this evening, that is, separated from our party, I should have been lectured out of all patience."

"Perhaps you will now."

"No; Mrs. Butler will say, 'where have you been, Miss Graham? Emma and the other ladies returned some time since,' and I shall reply 'with Mr. Carlton, madam,' and she will look as delighted as a successful manoeuvring mamma: why are you such a favorite?"

Carlton bit his lips to repress a smile, for he understood better than his companion, why Mrs. Butler was so very propitious. But was Jessie's question artless or artful? was she a designing coquette, who sought by affected benevolence and sympathy to excite his admiration? A moment before, he did admire her as a young girl, full of generous and noble feelings; but for a childish question of pardonable, womanly curiosity, he now doubted her truthfulness.

Oh, the injustice of this scandalous, suspicious little world of ours! It is not content to take things as it finds them, and with noble trust, impute the best motives for what it may not fully comprehend; but the least doubtful spot upon the fairness of a snow-flake, it must analyze until it has destroyed the fragile thing of beauty

and purity. It forgets that a snow-flake cannot fall amid the mire and filthiness of earth, without receiving a stain from the contact.

But for all Carlton's doubt, none of his distrust was communicated to his manner, as he replied—

"I have very great respect for Mrs. Butler: so, vice versa, she has for you—you are very modest."

"Ah, my truants, I have found you," said Mr. Butler, coming forward; "Jessie, Mrs. Butler has been pained at your long absence."

"I am sorry to cause Mrs. Butler any uneasiness," returned Jessie; "but I am sure she will forgive me, when she knows I have been under Mr. Carlton's protection."

"Have you been with Mr. Carlton all the time?" asked Mr. Butler. "Henry said, he saw him pacing like a sentry, with folded arms, up and down some street on the outskirts of the village."

"Then Mrs. Butler was more pained by my absence from Mr. Carlton, than from her," returned Jessie, archly. "Verily, Mr. Carlton, I shall believe that our dear Mrs. Butler has some covert design upon you."

"I trust not," said Carlton, with an attempt at gaiety, which he did not feel; "for all designs upon me must prove unavailing, I am impervious to all attacks. But, pardon me, Miss Graham, if I leave you in Mr. Butler's protection. I will call at the Post Office and inquire for the letters of your protégés. You see, I use no ceremony with you."

"Your kindness needs no apology, as you have anticipated my wishes; I was going to ask Mr. Butler to send as soon as we reached the hotel."

"Your protégés, Jessie?" said Mr. Butler, inquiringly.

"Some persons sick and in trouble, whom Miss Graham has visited," answered Carlton, apologetically; "but I will leave her to explain the circumstances—what name shall I inquire for? and did you learn where it would be mailed?"

"I did not think to ask the place," replied Jessie; "but it is in Michigan, and their names are David and Mary Walker; if you please, ask for both names, as it may be directed to Mrs. Walker, as her husband is so ill."

"And I shall still insist upon acting as your substitute to-night," said Carlton, as he left them.

"We will discuss that, after your return from the Post Office."

"Please explain, Jessie," said Mr. Butler; "I did not know you had any pensioners in the village."

"Nor have I," returned Jessie: and she related the circumstances attending her

introduction to Mrs. Walker, and her subsequent call at the house; and ended by declaring her intention of relieving Mrs. Walker of her duties as a nurse for the night, and saying, "you will accompany me, will you not?"

"But Mrs. Butler will object to your going," said Mr. Butler, "and I can easily hire a person better qualified for a nurse than you or myself."

"That you may do to-morrow, and I will thank you for acting as my agent (as I can only allow you to act as agent in that); but Mrs. Walker needs sympathy as much as rest, and I need not remind you that it is one of a clergyman's duties to visit the sick, suffering, and dying."

"I did not name a nurse to excuse myself, but Mrs. Butler will object to your vigil."

"Not if you approve and accompany me."

"But have you thought of what your fashionable friends may say at your turning nurse?"

"And can you suggest such an unworthy motive to influence my actions?"

"Mr. Cabell and Mr. Ware will be lost without the glittering of the star of their devotion."

"Then Mr. Ware may talk nonsense to every pretty lady he can find, and Mr. Cabell smoke cigars until they can find themselves."

"And the cynic—"

"May growl at—"

"He will accompany Miss Graham in her errand of mercy, if Mr. Butler declines his attendance; that is, if she will accept his protection," said the old man, stepping up to Jessie's side.

"Indeed, Mr. Howard," said Mr. Butler, "I believe you possess the power of ubiquity; but a moment since, I left you in the saloon making anything but pleasant speeches to a lady fair. But one who glories in being a cynic, will not take offence for having the title applied to him behind his back?"

"No offence, no apology, Mr. Butler; if I wanted licence to growl without being called hard names, I should have mounted the pulpit long ago."

"Mr. Howard has a general licence," said Mr. Butler, bowing with a smile, as they ascended the steps of the hotel.

"But is the question decided, which of us, sir, accompany your ward to-night?" asked the old man.

"If it is finally decided that Miss Graham fulfills her intention, I shall be her company," replied Mr. Butler.

"Miss Graham, I believe, has decided the question, have you not?" asked the tenacious old man, addressing Jessie.

"I have," she replied; "and as the only return I can make for your kind offer to

accompany me, will you please to keep the noble gentlemen whom Mr. Butler fears will lose themselves, sure of their own identity?"

"They are not worth the trouble," returned Mr. Howard, gruffly.

"How, Jessie?" asked Mr. Butler, as they entered their private parlor, "have you won the bright side of Mr. Howard, and destroyed all exhibition of his moroseness towards yourself?"

"I am sure I do not know," she returned, laughing, "unless it is upon the principle that alkalies neutralize acids."

"A scientific conclusion, certainly," responded Mr. Butler.

"Have you been walking with Mr. Howard, Miss Graham?" asked Mrs. Butler, in her most prim tone.

"No, ma'am; Mr. Howard has been walking with Mr. Butler, and I fortunately happened to be in the company."

"It was sometime after Miss Magnus's and the other ladies' return, before Mr. Butler started in quest of you; and you—"

"Miss Graham," said Mr. Carlton, interrupting Mrs. Butler by his entrance: "I have found a letter for Mr. David Walker, mailed in Michigan, and I fear your suspicion is correct. The clerk, in answer to my inquiries, said he remembered a woman's asking for the letter this afternoon, and then returning it, saying, she would not take it then."

"Thank you, thank you," returned Jessie, animatedly, reaching her hand for the letter.

"Nay," said he, "I will deliver it—"

"And rob me of a very great pleasure—"

"I will take it," added Mr. Butler; "I accompany Jessie to night."

"May I ask whither, and who the people are in whom you all manifest so much interest?" inquired Mrs. Butler.

"I will leave you to explain, gentlemen," said Jessie, rising to retire to her own apartment, "while I prepare for my vigil."

Mrs. Butler, when informed of the preceding incidents, objected to Jessie's fulfilling her intention; but when Mr. Butler said, "My dear, permit Jessie, in this case, to decide for herself, and dismiss your uneasiness, as I shall accompany her," she had too nice a sense of propriety, to dispute her husband's implied wishes before a third person, whatever she might have done in private, and Mr. Butler and Jessie soon after departed upon their errand of mercy.

The sick man's joy at the reception of the letter was only equalled by his wife's surprise in opening it, to find two bank bills carelessly thrust into the first fold. At Mr. Butler's suggestion, himself and Jessie had retired to the sitting-room, while Mrs. Walker opened and read the letter to her husband.

"These came from you," said the agitated woman, on their return to the chamber, placing the money in Jessie's hand, "and I cannot—"

"I do not understand you," interrupted Jessie, approaching the table to examine the little roll which had been thrust into her hand. "I do not understand," she continued; "I have not lost any money, nor—"

"I did not suppose you had lost it—but—but—I cannot take it," returned Mrs. Walker, the tears fast dropping from her eyelids.

"There is some mistake," continued Jessie, in a tone of doubt at the woman's meaning; "this money never belonged to me—where did you find it?"

"In the letter—you would have saved me from the humiliation of accepting—but I understand your kindness, and—"

"Oh!" said Jessie, a new light glancing into her mind upon the subject—"in the letter—then, undoubtedly, your children forwarded it; they might fear that your long stay, and their father's increased illness, might have drawn too fast upon your means, and—"

"They might have thought of it, but—but there is no mention of it in the letter, and it was folded and put in so," she continued, exhibiting the manner she had found it in the letter, "and I am sure they would not have enclosed it so carelessly, to come such a distance."

"But they might not have thought to send it until after the letter was sealed, and then did not think of their carelessness in enclosing it as they have—"

"No, no," interrupted Mrs. Walker, "they never sent it; and you have thought thus to save my feelings and escape the gratitude of a full heart—oh, you don't know—"

"Mrs. Walker, be calm—you give me too much credit; if I had thought you wanted any assistance, I should have been most happy to have furnished it: but this money I never saw, and know no more than you, from what source, or how it came in the letter—from your children, I should think the most probable."

"No, no," persisted Mrs. Walker; "if not you, it was this gentleman," turning to Mr. Butler.

"I was as ignorant of the enclosure as of the contents of the letter," returned Mr. Butler, "and most assuredly, my dear madam, you are not indebted to us for the money—wherever it may have come from, it now belongs to you; and if you have need of it, use it as the gift of Him who is ever a present help in trouble."

Mrs. Walker, weepingly, and with a grateful heart, placed the money in her empty purse, saying,

"At least, through you I have received

His bounty—and if the prayers of a grateful heart may avail atight, you both will ever be shielded from every evil."

And although the woman was grateful to both, yet her feelings were the most lively towards Jessie, as she was the first who had addressed her in the soothing accents of sympathy. She did not doubt their serious asseverations that they were ignorant of the enclosure, but she felt that by some means through them, she had received the timely assistance. They were not so much in doubt of the probable source of the gift, and both recognized the generous delicacy of Carlton in the act. But when afterwards questioned upon the subject, he evaded the queries, and there never was any confirmation that he was the author of the gift, although Mrs. Walker's conviction that her children had not sent the money, was confirmed by their denial of any knowledge of the matter.

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE next morning, by dawn, Mr. Butler and Jessie relinquished the care of the sick man, as it was necessary the latter should be dressed to fulfill her engagement with Mr. Ware, as the hour appointed for the ride was early morn.

A large party were to accompany them, and the numbers, rather than Mr. Ware's fascinating exterior, reputed wealth, and unexceptionable horses, had induced Mrs. Butler to consent to Jessie's proposed escort.

Truly, that worthy lady was beset with trials, and we query, if the question had been proposed to her, "What is the greatest vexation in life?" whether she would not have instinctively replied, "The care of a young lady in her teens. not engaged."

Marriage being the only proper position for a woman, Mrs. Butler, as priestess of propriety, could not imagine anything more unfortunate in a young lady's situation, than the want of a proper, positive, matrimonial engagement. Do unmarried and unwooed ladies ever entertain the same opinion?

During the ride it required no great management from Mr. Ware to separate himself and companion from their company, and having done so, he slackened the pace of his horse, and as they reached the brow of a gentle eminence, drew the rein and paused. His horses were a matched pair, whose gentle training but did justice to their superb beauty, and the exquisite taste of their owner; and the instant that he drew the rein of the one he rode, the other, equally obedient to the wishes of its master, ranged close by the

side of its companion, and stopped without monition from its rider.

The sun was not far above the eastern horizon, and the dew still glittered, like the sparkling tiara of a fairy queen, upon the brow of gleesome nature. The vale, dotted with its quiet homes, was stretched at their feet; and, in the far distance, through a glade, the waters of a tiny lake glimmered in the morning's sunbeams.

"How beautiful!" exclaimed Mr. Ware, in a low tone, as if the words had involuntarily escaped him, gazing earnestly upon the face of his fair companion.

"There is a quiet beauty in a morning landscape," she replied, "which I love. At any other hour of the day, there is toil, weariness, fatigue, and the turmoil of busy labor, which destroy the silent beauty of the morning hour, when all is still and refreshed from the weariness of the preceding day." And she paused, as she noted the laborers going forth into the fields to renew their daily toil. "But I like not this," she continued; "it seems as though the very earth must be weary of the constant trenching and ditching, and ache to lie still. The northern farmer is a severe task-master, who keeps continually jogging the elbow of the sluggish earth, to make it perform a greater task and yield a richer reward. No, no; my heart still lingers in the sunny clime where my childhood was passed. There the earth spontaneously yielded forth its bounties, and man had nought to do but gather in its abundance."

"It matters not to me, whether my life is spent in the genial south, or the more bracing climes of the north," returned her companion; "happiness consists in the enjoyment of the heart, not the breeze which fans the brow."

"True; but exercise, instead of sentimentalizing, is the order of the morning; shall we not rejoin our company?"

"Certainly, if you desire it; but will you not devote one little moment to me? a moment eagerly sought, but dreaded, lest it bring despair with it."

"Nay, nay, do not ask it, if it involves peril or evil; for I would not lose my breakfast upon any consideration."

"Is your breakfast of greater importance than another's happiness?"

"Perhaps so; I should not like to have the question tested. But there are our friends; let us rejoin them," she continued, pointing to the equestrian party, which were coursing the valley at their feet.

"Pardon me; I will detain you but for a moment. But tell me, ere we again mingle with yon joyous crowd, whether your heart is free, and if I may hope, by tender devotion and the most ardent

affection, to win a place in its pleasant memories?"

"All who contribute to my pleasure are entitled to that."

"And would you deem me presumptuous, should I ask more, even the return of that which I cannot withhold—my love?"

"Mr. Ware," said Jessie, looking him frankly in the face, while her own was dyed with crimson hue of embarrassment and ingenuousness, "I would rather have misconstrued your question, and that you had received the general answer, instead of closely pressing a personal one."

"Am I to infer there is no hope—that your affections are engaged?"

"Nay, the last clause of your inference is ungenerous—and let me beg that this subject be dropped, never to be renewed between us."

"Has my happiness or misery no weight with you? am I to be dismissed as coolly as you would tell your waiting-maid that you had no farther need of her services?"

"Mr. Ware, if I have understood you, please to understand me; any farther discussion of this question cannot add to your pleasure, and it distresses me."

"Tell me," he exclaimed, provoked beyond politeness, and even forgetful of the strong reasons which he had to bear everything, if he could but succeed; "tell me, does that puppy, Carlton, stand between me and your affections?"

"Sir," retorted Jessie, her anger aroused at the unlicensed language of his speech, "your conduct is both unmanly and ungenerous—nothing—"

"Forgive me! pardon my rudeness—my fears make me mad," he pleaded, aware of the mistake of his passion—"your indifference arouses the lion of my nature—but bid me hope, and your gentle spirit shall curb this wildness of passion."

"I have no disposition to turn dancing-master or school-mistress to an unmannerly bear—but I would rejoin our company." And she tightened the reins to give her steed intimation of her desire.

"Nay, you leave me not thus," he exclaimed, catching the hand which rested on the pommel of her saddle.

"Mr. Ware!" she returned, striving to disengage her hand, "your conduct is unwarrantable and insulting—"

"Nay, nay," he interrupted, pressing the gloved hand passionately to his lips, "let this be the seal of your forgiveness for my madness. I love not as tamely as other men—promise me, that this hand shall be mine—"

"Never! it should sooner be separated from my body, than be pledged to you."

"Never!" he repeated, in muttered tone, between his clenched teeth. "Beware! if my love is scorned and turned to hatred, hate as but few can hate!"

"Fear has but small influence over my nature," she replied, in a tone of bitter scorn; "and you mistake me much, if you think to intimidate me by a base, unmanly threat. But, if a spark of manhood rests in your breast, release my hand and detain me no longer."

"Go then!" said he, flinging the hand from him, "but, beware!"

"Think you that I am a fearful girl, frightened by a coward's breath? See!" and she drew her glove from her hand, "my hand has not been stained by contact with your lips, but my glove is more sullied than if it had rested in the mire of the muddiest pool," and she dashed it upon the ground.

"Enough!"

"Mr. Ware," exclaimed Henry, as the party, which had approached unnoticed during the excitement of the last few minutes, gathered round them; "if your horses are as good at running as standing, you will take every stake in the country, if you enter the lists."

"The speed of my horses is only equalled by their gentleness—"

"But, what in the name of all this rustic beauty has engaged your attention for the last hour? I can see nothing but two shanties, three men and a boy in their shirt sleeves—pardon me, ladies, without coats—and six sheep, fourteen cows, and a pig-sty, with how many occupants I can't tell."

"When did you take your last lesson in 'mental arithmetic for new beginners,' and learn to count so rapidly?" asked Jessie, striving to appear natural.

"Arithmetic! I have been through two, one treatise in Algebra, and commenced geometry and astronomy since you sat here watching sunshine and—"

"Mr. Raymond has been very impatient for his breakfast, which must account for his surprising progress in the exact sciences," interposed Mr. Cabell, who had pushed his horse very near the speakers.

"And if I mistake not," said Carlton, who also had approached the spot, "Miss Graham is equally desirous of taking hers, and has been waiting only for us to join herself and Mr. Ware, that she might return without the fatigue of riding over the whole country."

"When Miss Graham is conscious of fatigue upon a gentle horse like this," said Henry, patting the neck of the noble animal, "I shall open my eyes, and fear for her health."

"I hope," continued Carlton, addressing Jessie in an under tone, and not noticing Henry's boyish remark, "you have not experienced any ill effects from the last night's duty?"

"None whatever—and left my patient as well as may be in his case; and both himself and wife relieved by the contents

of the letter. For which let me, in their name, thank you, as only grateful heart can thank."

"I must plead—" commenced Carlton.

"I shall plead for my breakfast," interrupted Henry.

"Shall I show you the way?" returned Jessie, striking the mettled steed on which she sat, more earnestly than she was aware, over its head.

With a bound the noble animal obeyed the signal, and with the speed of an antelope sped onward. Both Henry and Carlton in an instant reined their horses in pursuit.

"Hold!" exclaimed Ware, in a voice of thunder; "pursuit will but madden the horse to hold on its course—it is a trained racer."

"And you could endanger a lady's life, by withholding the fact?" returned Carlton.

"And shall we, for that, stay here and see her murdered by your recklessness, in our sight?" exclaimed Henry.

"Oh, dear!" was Emma's muttered shriek.

"Do follow her!" exclaimed the remainder of the party.

"Oh! oh!" shrieked Mrs. Adams.

"What shall we do?" demanded Mr. Cabell, turning to Mr. Ware.

"Follow now, or remain here," returned Mr. Ware. "To overtake her is out of the question—there are but two horses in America which could do that—and pursuit which would reach the horse's ear, would but excite her the more—she has been trained not to be distanced."

"And yet you could place a lady on its back!"

"Mr. Carlton, you, as well as every person present, can attest to Beauty's extreme gentleness—but she will not bear the whip—if Miss Graham but knew to turn her suddenly, and can keep her seat, all will be well."

These remarks did not pass as we have recorded them, one after another, but in the excitement of the moment all spoke together, and the upbraidings and replies were uttered in anything but the measured tones of courtesy.

At the instant permission to follow was uttered, young Cabell dashed forward at the utmost speed of his horse; and Carlton, while Mr. Ware was still speaking, turned to Henry: "follow," said he, "with the ladies, while I accompany Mr. Ware in what I fear will be a painful pursuit—but do not betray to Miss Magnum my apprehensions. Miss Adams," he continued, turning to Miss Julia, "I will leave you in Mr. Raymond's care—at this time, I am certain, I need no apology."

"No, no; do go," murmured all the ladies; and Carlton's humanity, at least, required no second bidding

On, on, with the swiftness of a bird of air, sped the excited animal, fast bearing its helpless rider beyond the sight of her affrighted friends. The first bound had nearly unseated her, but with instant presence of mind she recovered her balance, and firmly bracing herself in the stirrup, sought only to keep the animal upon the open road, and retain her seat, until some favorable interposition might arise to preserve her from destruction. Had she known that the horse had but obeyed its signal at the starting-post, perchance, she would have experienced even more alarm, than under the impression that the beast was affrighted. But Jessie's temperament was equal, as far as woman's can be, to any sudden emergency of danger, and, though pale with apprehension, yet she was sufficiently calm to notice and improve any circumstance which might enable her to regain the mastery of her steed.

"Wheel your horse suddenly!" said a loud voice, with the intonation carefully modulated to preserve it from a shout, as the swift-footed beast was still coursing onward at the height of its speed.

Jessie caught the direction, and the next instant, stood in safety beside Mr. Howard.

"Ah, Beauty," said the old gentleman, patting and caressing the horse, even before he addressed Jessie, "you do your master's training justice.

"And for what were you running a race, my brave miss?" he continued.

"You must seek the motive from Beauty; I was only a passive passenger."

"Ah, so I thought—but you will win the master's heart by your fearless riding of his darling racer."

"A racer! even Mr. Ware would hardly do that."

"Even Mr. Ware dares do many things which would ruin the reputation of most men—but he is such a dear man, the ladies' admiration saves his character."

"Tell me," returned Jessie, entreatingly, "have I been made the jockey-rider of a known racer? If so,—"

"Pshaw! don't get in a passion," interrupted the old cynic, "you could break your neck as coolly as any woman, but you are in trantrums the moment you suspect that, as the amiable Mrs. Butler would say, it was not a proper horse to kill a young lady on which you rode. But don't let your vanity do what Beauty could not," continued the cynic, in a kinder tone, as he saw her evident pain under the infliction of his lash, "let it comfort you, that, although Beauty is a trained racer, yet she never has been entered on the lists of a race-course."

"Thank heaven!" ejaculated the excited girl.

"Woman, woman! you can thank Heaven for being saved from what you would

deem a disgrace, but you have no thanksgiving for being rescued from evident peril—"

"If I forgot to thank you, it was not—"

"Thank—thank your Maker, not man! I want no thanks. I am grateful to that power which rules the small as well as the greater things, that I was led this way."

"But I would thank you as the instrument."

"The ploughshare turns up and makes the earth mellow; but is that to be praised for the abundance of the harvest?"

"Yes, as the instrument."

"But it is nothing without the will and power which directs it. But I see some of your laggard gallants on the wing. Will you wait for Mr. Ware, or return with me?"

"With you, but—"

"Oh, my horse is near by."

"But I—"

"Woman still; you fear to mount Beauty, and fear to say so."

"But—"

"But what! there is no danger—give me your whip—you have tested the horse's gentleness."

"But perhaps it has not recovered from its fright."

"It has not been frightened; by some of your vanity flourishes, you struck the horse over the head."

"How do you know?"

"Know! I know both the beast and its owner: but if you ride with me, mount."

She instantly obeyed the command, and Mr. Howard brought forth from the shelter of an angle in the fence his own steed, and with a grace which might have shamed many younger cavaliers, threw himself upon its back, at the moment Mr. Ware, who had distanced the other pursuers, appeared in sight. With a parting bow of courtesy or mockery to the gentlemen in the distance, Mr. Howard rode forward with his assumed charge; and Mr. Ware, when he noticed the action, slackened his speed, to await the coming of the rest of the party. He was in no mood to encounter both Mr. Howard and Jessie on their ride home; but it is justice to add that he was gratified that no serious harm had happened to the scornful girl in her Gilpin race. Not that her preservation was of so much importance to him in his present state of feeling; but it would be a sorry plume amid his honors, to have been accessory to a lady's death or injury, by placing her upon an unsafe horse.

"It seems," said Jessie, as they rode leisurely along, "that I am destined to hair-breadth escapes."

"There is no destiny about it," returned Mr. Howard, "unless you are destined to break your neck by rashness."

"There was no rashness in my riding

horse which every one praised as much for its gentleness as beauty."

"No; but you knew it was as spirited as gentle; and there was no necessity for a young lady to go whipping along like a trooper."

"Be merciful, dear sir; I am in no humor to be blamed this morning—and I would not quarrel with you."

"Ah, you think to coax the cynic into good-nature, but he must growl—"

"Growl then at the world, at Mr. Ware, at any body but me; for you know I do not believe in your moroseness—it is only the rough skin of a kind heart."

"Flattery will not tame the tiger."

"But kindness will."

"Reserve your sweet words for your younger gallants."

"No, no; they might be flattered and vain; for I have learned enough to know that a lady cannot treat a young gentleman with civility, but what he will instantly presume that she is in love with him."

"Have you been troubled with such presumptuous young gentlemen?" asked the old man, with a keen glance upon her face.

"My remark was from observation, not experience," she replied, looking earnestly forward, and avoiding his inquiring gaze.

"You are too young for very keen observation, and by such remarks, a young lady betrays more of experimental than theoretical knowledge."

"Thank you, for your caution," returned Jessie, laughing; "you see, I can learn my lesson easily."

"But," she added, after a slight pause, "will you tell who and what Mr. Ware is? you remarked that you knew him."

"The most fascinating at the springs."

"That I knew before—I know also that he is well received by all our fashionables; but I have an instinct that he is not what he appears."

"There you mistake and show your want of observation. He is no impostor."

"I did not think that, but—"

"But you thought something, you cannot tell what; always define your thoughts before you express them."

"At any rate, I do not think him an honorable man."

"Honor! what is honor! In one place, wealth is the criterion; in another, birth, blood, and respectable connexions; in the third, they boast to honor intellect and morality, without the accidental circumstances of having been blessed with a grand parent and funds. By each of these standards, Mr. Ware is strictly entitled to the claim of honorable and respectable. His father died some years since, leaving him the sole inheritor of a handsome, if not princely fortune. His family were, and all of his connexions are, aristocratic and fashiona-

ble—his intellect, if it were exercised aright, is sufficiently powerful to win the plaudits of the popular voice, and he has never been guilty of any overt act, condemned by the laws or public opinion. Do not these essentials constitute all that is necessary for an honorable man to possess! and are you satisfied?"

"There is another side to the picture; let me see that, and I will answer you."

"This side is all that the most anxious mother would inquire, if he was an applicant for her daughter."

"But I know no more about him than I did before—you might as well have told me that he was the owner of Beauty, lived in a four-story house, and that his grandmother was a very nice, clever woman," returned Jessie, petulantly.

"Well, miss, as you are so tenacious," continued the old gentleman with a smile, emphasizing some of his words so as to bring the color into his auditor's cheeks, "for your special benefit, I will add, he wants a wife. Wealth is the indispensable quality which he seeks, although he will also want his taste for the beautiful gratified; but beauty can be dispensed with, if he cannot gain the two united. A wife's fortune may be convenient to repair the inroads which some of his expenses have made upon his own, as he is a spendthrift in the gratification of his appetites and passions. He has a quick, passionate, ungovernable temper—is selfish, cold-hearted, cowardly, revengeful, tyrannical, vicious, licentious, and avaricious. But for all this, the world calls him an honorable man, and by its standard, he is so—will he prosper in his suit when he sues for the hand of Miss Graham?"

"Miss Graham wants every quality which you have assured me are indispensable in Mr. Ware's catalogue, and he will not offer her the honor of his name and hand."

"Rumor has made her an heiress, and it is generally credited that the tale is true."

"Then I beg of you to correct the false report. Jessie Graham is an orphan, dependent upon the kindness and bounty of an—of friends."

"Of an uncle, who has no other heir."

"You mistake, sir," replied Jessie, surprised at the remark of the old gentleman, "I am not my uncle's heir. But I am at a loss to understand how you have gained the information which your remark implies."

"No matter, as long as it is true; your uncle may storm and scold, but Jessie, the daughter of his sister Sophia, will still be his heir."

"Not without taking an incumbrance with his property, which she declines. But did you know my mother?"

"Yes; but ask me nothing about it."



past—I want to talk of you. It is folly to allow a childish antipathy, engendered by opposition, to actuate the decision of your womanhood. If you were acquainted with Tom, and had no personal dislike, would you reject him as a husband, because it would gratify your old uncle?"

"The absence of a personal dislike would be no guarantee of a personal preference. I shall never marry any one, but to please myself—that is a question which a third person cannot decide."

"Nor the first persons, often; you—"

"Do not, I entreat you," interrupted Jessie, "lecture me upon the subject of matrimony. If I ever wished myself a man, it has been to escape the gauntlet to marriage to which all of my sex are doomed."

"Would you not rather be the man that you might be the wooer instead of the wooed?"

"No; I want no privilege which nature has denied my sex, but I want to be recognized as a reasonable, responsible, intelligent being, as well as a marriageable one. I was born to think, to act, and to know individually, as well as man. A girl has duties and relations independent of the one idea, continually, from every source, forced upon her mind."

"But that is the paramount one, and the one which, perhaps, involves her future happiness."

"No more so than it does the other sex—that is, if she were educated to consider herself in any other relation than a wife in the perspective."

"It appears that you have given the subject an earnest investigation."

"How could it be otherwise? It is constantly pressed upon my attention, as if my very hopes of heaven depended upon a timely and desirable marriage. But here we are almost at the end of our ride, and you must tell me of my mother, where and when you knew her."

"Must! then I shall not."

"Pardon the rudeness of my speech; I meant as an entreaty what you have construed as a command—"

"Remember, then, that a speech once said cannot be recalled—you have need of this lesson, and my refusal will impress it upon your memory."

"You cannot be so cruel."

"It is not cruelty, but kindness," returned Mr. Howard, as they approached the hotel; "a kind parent punishes his wayward child, not to inflict pain, but to produce reformation."

"I could remember the lessons without the punishment," said Jessie, as she alighted.

"Where are the rest of the party?" asked Mrs. Butler, as Jessie entered the parlor.

"They will be here soon, I rode forward with Mr. Howard."

"Are you aware of the impropriety of—"

"Oh, Jessie!" exclaimed Emma, bursting into the room, and flinging her arms around her friend's neck.

"What is—?"

The entrance of the other members of the equestrian party interrupted Mrs. Butler's query, and the mutual inquiries and answers soon informed her of the morning's adventure.

"Were you not frightened?" asked Mrs. Adams, as she adjusted a misplaced ringlet.

"Perhaps so, at first—but I had forgotten all about my race."

"Forgotten!" exclaimed a half dozen voices.

"Miss Graham," said Mr. Ware, entering the room, and approaching Jessie, "I trust you have received no injury from your unfortunate ride."

"None, whatever, sir," she returned, in the most chilling tones of formal politeness, "and I hope that you have found your horse equally safe from all hurt."

"I have not inquired—shall I send the groom to report its condition?"

"Breakfast! breakfast!" called Henry; "ladies and gentlemen, shall I marshal the way?"

"Beware!" was Mr. Ware's muttered exclamation, in a tone so low, that it reached only the ear of Jessie, as she passed him.

A look of proud contempt was his only reply. But the movement of his lips, and the scornful disdain of the haughty girl, with the malignant frown which gathered upon the brow of the equally proud man, were all noticed by one as acute in his deductions, as keen in his observation—Mr. Howard.

"Fool, fool," muttered he, as he stepped forward and offered Jessie his arm to conduct her to the table, "could you not be content in admiring the beauty of the serpent's skin, without provoking its bite?"

"If it attacks, it has first sounded its rattle," she replied, in the same tone.

"And for you, there is no safety but in its cowardice, and slavish fear of the world's scorn."

During the morning, Mr. Howard presented himself where he had not been seen before, in the shooting gallery.

"And shall we not have a trial of your skill?" exclaimed several voices, addressing the old man in raillery.

"Poh! poh!" he returned, "I might shoot somebody, or break the windows."

"No matter," they continued, surprised at his good-natured tone, and anticipating some amusement, if they could induce him to exhibit the strength of his sight and nerve. "No matter, if you kill any

of us, the remainder shall act as coroner's jury, and return a verdict of 'justifiable homicide.'"

"But the damage of the windows might not be as easily disposed of," said he.

"Yes, yes; the windows are insured, or our purses might suffer."

"Well, well," he returned, "give me a pistol, and I'll shoot foolishly, if not at folly."

"Don't shoot yourself," said Mr. Ware, who was in the crowd; "for nothing but the prospect of immediate death could have induced the cynic to accede pleasantly to the request of man."

"Have a care that I do not shoot you," replied Mr. Howard, with a marked emphasis.

He raised the pistol carelessly, and fired.

"By Jove, what a shot!" exclaimed a young gentleman, whose word was oracular with the sportsmen who frequented the gallery. The ball had pierced the centre of the target.

"That must have been an accidental hit," said the old gentleman, turning with apparent indifference, and handing the discharged weapon to the servant whose duty it was to reload for the amateur sportsmen. "Give me another, I will try again."

Another pistol was handed him, which he scarcely received before the ball was lodged with the same unerring precision, in the same place as the former.

"No other man in America could have done that twice," exclaimed the oracle of the gallery.

"Pahaw!" returned Mr. Howard, "give me a man for a mark, and I can hit him at twenty or thirty paces:" and his eye again rested upon Mr. Ware, meaningly.

"But I will try once more, to see whether the old man's nerves have become palsied by age."

When the pistol was given him, he picked from among the gunner's magazines which strewed the table, a small piece of sheet lead, less somewhat in size than a quarter of a dollar: and as he extended his right hand to fire, he flung the lead from the left, and the ball pierced it, as it whirled through the air.

A shout proclaimed his victory, but no one was daring enough to challenge further trial of his skill.

"I reckon," said a young Virginian, coming forward, "you have had some practice, sir?"

"Enough to shoot a hawk, or wing a turkey," replied the old man, gruffly.

"If I mistake not," returned the young man, "you have aimed at other game."

"Those who fear powder and ball, more than they respect the principles of justice or the defence of the weak, will be much dread becoming a target for my

shooting, to allow me the chance of administering correction to intelligent game—and I never should shoot at a man upon other principles, than I should kill a wolf, or destroy an obnoxious reptile, because they are a pest to society," responded the eccentric old gentleman, as he turned on his heel to leave the gallery.

"There," muttered he to himself, as he walked towards the hotel, "my skill as a marksman may have more power to keep his bad blood from fermenting, than the dirk of my tongue."

## CHAPTER XVII

According to Jessie's desire, Mr. Butler had procured a nurse to assist Mrs. Walker in the care of her dying husband; and the invalid had been removed to a more airy and comfortable apartment. And to the credit of humanity be it spoken, not one of the few to whom the griefs and anxieties of the almost widowed wife were communicated, but ministered to her wants and sought by sympathy and kindness to soothe the grief-worn, and smooth the passage of the dying sufferer to the tomb. Henry was not behind Carlton in the delicacy of his offering upon the shrine of benevolence; and Mr. Dwight often sat hours beside the sick man's bed, inspiring him with hope and faith to meet the last trial of humanity.

The recipients of their bounties and attentions were kindly-hearted and worthy, but simple-minded people, whose astonishment was only overpowered by their gratitude, at receiving such unexpected relief and kindness from fashionable gentlemen and ladies.

If the wealthier and humbler classes of society were more often drawn into personal intercourse, the one would not be regarded as more unfeeling and less sympathizing, nor the other as all ignorance and vulgarity, beyond the pale of those gentle influences which constitute the sum of happiness in life, whether within a palace hall or beside the humblest cottage hearth. Sincerity of feeling and true affection refine and elevate even the ignorant, and can never become vulgar; while the most gifted intellect, and most unexceptionable manners, can never atone for the want of that light which gleamed from the realms of blessed purity, when the divine injunction was uttered, "Love one another."

But a few days passed, and the sad attentions of the benevolent were no longer required. Death claimed his own from the hands of disease, and the heart of the cold corpse could no longer throb with gratitude, or quiver with pain at the thoughts

of separation from its loved ones. Death, however long we have been watching its approach, chills the curdling blood of the bereaved as he watches the last final agony of dissolution. And Mrs. Walker bowed in speechless grief over the confined remains of her husband. She had loved him with woman's affection, and the sorrow of her own bereavement, with the memory of her far-off fatherless little ones, fell upon her brain like scorching fire, and her eyes were tearless. Her woe was too deep for utterance.

"Death is inevitable," said Mrs. Butler, who had called with Mr. Butler and Jessie immediately after hearing of the demise of the invalid, "and although we must mourn for our departed friends, yet it is proper for us to remember that it is love as well as power which has afflicted us, and one whose wisdom cannot err. I cannot say do not mourn, but mourn not as one without hope."

The afflicted woman looked up with a glassy stare, as if she hardly comprehended the words of consolation addressed to her; while Jessie, from the impulse of her ardent nature, kneeled at her feet, and clasping her labor-hardened hands within the pressure of her own soft, jewelled fingers, burst into tears. The sympathy of the act was electrical; and the tears, which had been locked within their fountain of sorrow, leaped from the heart to the eyes of the grief-stricken mourner, and she bowed her head upon the shoulder of the sympathizing girl, and gave vent to the agony of her heart.

Tears did not assuage the bitterness of her grief, but relieved its suffocating oppression, and no one interrupted this natural expression of sorrow.

After she became more calm, Mr. Butler reminded her of the blessed promises made by omnipotent benevolence, to the "widow and fatherless," and after addressing a fervent petition to Him who is always ready to hear the sorrowing as well as penitent, they took their leave.

Mr. Dwight and Carlton assumed the direction of the obsequies to the humble dead, but, upon making inquiries, found the arrangements all made and the expenses discharged, and more than a sufficient sum left to defray the charges of Mrs. Walker's journey homeward.

"Can you tell us," asked Mr. Dwight of Mrs. Walker, as they ascertained that their services were not required in the matter, "who has anticipated our intentions, and if everything is arranged, as far as may be, to your wishes?"

"Oh, everything, everything is right," she replied, "if I had been Miss Graham's sister or mother, instead of a poor, unknown stranger, she could not have been more kind."

"Is it Miss Graham who has given these orders?" asked Carlton, knowing that she had done so, it was independent of Mr. Butler's knowledge.

"I do not know that it is her," returned Mrs. Walker; "but who besides her always thinks of everything? (and now there is nothing forgotten;) and but for her, who could not see a tear upon a stranger's face, but what she would wipe it off, where, where, should I now be?"

In the excess of her gratitude for the first words of sympathy breathed in her ear, Mrs. Walker gave Jessie credit for all the good which a dozen different persons had bestowed upon her. Not that she was ungrateful to any one; but she thought, and perhaps truly, that if Jessie had not first given impetus to their benevolence, it would have remained inactive.

But in this instance, as in many others, she gave Jessie credit for more than she had performed. Mr. Howard had directed the arrangements for the funeral, and left the money for Mrs. Walker's benefit; but with his usual eccentricity had done it in a manner that the act might be attributed (as it was) to Jessie's benevolence. And, not even Jessie Graham could have exhibited more thoughtfulness for the wants of the poor woman, than had the kind-hearted, but whimsical old man. And he was not suspected of interference in the matter, as he had not shown any interest for the sufferers since the first evening their wants had become known to those who had so earnestly striven to alleviate them, when he had threatened to supply Mr. Butler's place in visiting the sick, if the latter gentleman hesitated in the performance of the duty.

The dust was consigned to its kindred dust, and the solitary mourner departed with grief and gratitude swelling her heart for her far-distant home.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

DURING the last few days of the sick man's sufferings, and since the morning of the eventful ride, Jessie had mingled but little in the gay throng of pleasure-seekers; and was scarce aware that any change had come over her hour of gaiety. Her thoughts had been too painfully occupied with the sorrows of another, to note particularly the void occasioned by the cessation of attentions from the "most fascinating man" in the crowd. And Mr. Ware appeared to have almost forgotten her existence; and his mortification at her unequivocal rejection of his suit was smothered, or buried in oblivion by his earnest and pointed attentions to the fair Mrs. Adams. And that lady, taking the coloring of her

manner from her attendant cavalier, or from a phase in woman's mind, which we cannot comprehend, scarcely noticed the presence of her former "dear Miss Graham."

Let woman win from, or accept the rejected lover of another woman, and, almost ever, she will treat her whom she has wronged, or whose taste does not assimilate with her own, with open disdain or the killing civility of cold formality. We know not why, but the angel sex will triumph in a conquest over a man who has bowed at another shrine rather than that of their own charms; and a lover who has been rejected, will find the next fair one either cruel and unjust to him or to his former lady-love. Is it that woman has not sufficient self-reliance to be pleased with the approbation of her own judgment, but must have that sustained by the universal verdict of popular favor? or does she accept or reject her lover to please the world instead of herself? May all good, and unalloyed happiness be the portion of every gentle heart and fair face in the wide world—but there are but few among them that can decide why they want a lover, or what kind of one will contribute to their bliss, only they *must* be married to escape the evil of old-maidism!

Fair and lovely reader, who may resent the breadth of our implication, rather than expression; we love you none the less, if our pen sometimes betrays our suspicion that all women are not angels of goodness. With our hand upon our heart, and our eyes raised pleadingly to yours, we solemnly and truly protest, that we wish most earnestly that every woman upon the broad face of the earth, was an angel, and we will believe them all so, when we see one! And if we are ever severe upon the foibles of the sex, it is not because we love them less, but because we would that they were even more *lovable*!

A dutiful and affectionate daughter, a kind and loving sister, have duties as pure, true, and ennobling as the wife. The one item of securing a lover, is not the only end and aim of woman's existence.

Carlton still retained a tincture of the suspicion against the thoughtless girl, and his manner was the guarded respectful politeness, which he knew due Mr. Burton's niece. Mr. Cabell's admiration had stood the test of a few days' seclusion from the presence of the admired object. He was too young to learn suspicion from an unguarded expression, and too warm-hearted to return kindly emotions as for value received."

Emma and Henry were too old friends to change their affections by the unstable standard of fashionable popularity; and Emma's fears and unexpected anxieties: her information from home had brought her

the intelligence that she must not anticipate longer the presence of her parents during the latter part of her sojourn at the north, as the health of her mother would not warrant the journey. But her mother's health had been mentioned vaguely, rather as an excuse for not joining her, as previously arranged, than as a matter of apprehension, and she was anxiously awaiting farther intelligence.

Mr. Howard remained *in statu quo*, scolding Jessie heartily to her face, but her warmest champion in her absence; often declaring in his own serio-comic style that "If a gentleman dared insinuate aught against her claims to goodness, beauty, or wealth, that he should hold him answerable for his assertion at twenty paces with rifle or pistol; but the ladies were privileged by envy, malice, or spite to abuse any of their own sex, if they did it in a lady-like *inuendo*, which meant nothing."

And we regret to record that his championship was warranted by the circumstances. A whisper had been uttered, from whence none could say, that Jessie was not an heiress; consequently, her every act was viewed through a questionable medium, and her earnest sympathy for the humble sufferers who had been warmed by her benevolence, was credited to ostentatious display, rather than charity and the pure fire of philanthropy.

Of course, those who whispered these things were too well-bred to assert them; no one could tell from whom he had received the impression; but questions were asked, and those too noble to have done injustice to the humblest, were infected with a suspicion or fear that Miss Graham might not be worthy of their notice, as there was something truly mistrustful in her evident ignorance of her grandfather, and her friend's silence of her relatives.

Poor Jessie! she was crowding the emotions and events of a life-time into a few months, and in every one's chalice there are mingled drops of bitterness.

She was aware that the effervescing draught of pleasure was palling upon her lips, but she knew not why, and suspected not that mere pleasure requires adventitious aids to make it palatable; and had not learned that happiness was a home principle, whose springs are seated deep within the heart.

The young mistake, and think pleasure and happiness are synonymous terms, and in their eagerness to catch the fleeting bubbles of the former, often congeal the fountains of the latter.

"Miss Graham, are you sad, that you are so very silent this morning?" asked Mr. Cabell, approaching her as she was listlessly gazing from the window.

"Sad!" she repeated, starting; "does your query liken me to a child's plaything

the other ladies. Mrs. Butler was annoyed, and Emma grieved; but as Henry occupied the seat vacated by Jessie's absence, the latter forgot, before her return, her unhappiness in the starting hour.

To some minds a lover fills the whole space, and compensates for father, mother, and friends. To others equally ardent in temperament, and perhaps more so, a lover can but fill his own space. He is not the "all in all," although the dearest. But that woman is more happy, and her chosen the better satisfied, when he is all her heart desires, and his love answers its cravings.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE splendor of the new equipage resuscitated Jessie's waning glory. Those who had prudently doubted, did so no longer, and her star was in the ascendant. But she better understood now the worth of the admiration and adulation offered at her shrine. Her vanity might be flattered; (and what young girl would not be, to be followed, caressed, and admired!) but she now estimated it at its true value; and understood, as she said, "that it was admiration of her horses and servants, while she, herself, was but a worthless bit of colored glass without these golden settings."

But towards her kind old uncle, her heart warmed. Although his liberality had been uncalled-for, almost unwished, yet she could not be ungrateful for his unanticipated kindness; and almost wished that, without knowing it, she might meet and marry his favorite Tom, to reward him.

Carlton interpreted the matter differently; and thought Mr. Burton's munificence was but to tempt his admiration for the heiress, that he might marry the niece; and he consequently withdrew his attentions almost entirely; at least did not proffer any beyond the compulsory bounds of politeness. But in the crowd of eager pleasure-seekers, his coldness was not noticed but by two persons, Mr. Howard and Mr. Ware, and each drew his own conclusions, but they were as dissimilar as the characters of the two gentlemen. From this circumstance, to which both were apparently indifferent spectators, the one formed his scheme of revenge, and the other but hovered the nearer to ward off the evil which he saw approaching. Mr. Ware, from keen observation, sharpened by ill-will, had discovered something of Jessie's position in life, and that her future possessions depended upon the will of the living, not the dead; that she was an heiress only if she pleased some person whose mind might be changed. For he was too well

versed in the mysteries of life, not to know, that the will of those who had ceased to have a will, only was unchangeable. But he was too subtle to betray his knowledge until he had ascertained upon whom the proud girl, who had scorned him, was dependent. Yet the twinkle of satisfaction, which at times, as he regarded her, gleamed from his eye, was token to Mr. Howard that evil was pending.

In the meanwhile, farther intelligence from the south alarmed Emma; and apprehensive of greater evil than her father advised her of, she formed the hasty resolution to return home, and in person watch her mother's declining health. Henry, of course, was to form her escort; and Mrs. Butler, under the existing circumstances, either wisely or prudently forbore any opposition to the proposed measure.

The morning of her departure arrived, and Jessie, desirous of delaying the parting hour, proposed taking her as far as Schenectady in the carriage.

"My dear Miss Graham," said Mrs. Butler, "I beg you will not think of it; you will have to return alone, and it will be highly improper."

"You forget, madam," returned Jessie, warmly, annoyed by the opposition, "that I am provided with servants for protection."

"But for a young lady to ride twenty miles without other attendance than her servants—"

"Certainly cannot be criminal," interrupted Jessie, finishing Mrs. Butler's sentence.

"But, Miss Graham, there are many things not criminal, yet very improper."

"Let them remain so," interposed the incorrigible girl, with a frown; "I have no time now to discuss the propriety of an act which I shall perform." And she crossed the room, and gave the bell-rope a pull, indicative of her own fevered impatience; and which brought a servant to the door in greater haste than most lackeys use in answering a summons.

"Tell Miss Graham's coachman to have her carriage at the door in ten minutes," was her command.

"Yes, ma'am," said the servant, bowing as he closed the door.

"Miss Graham, if you will accompany Miss Magnum and Mr. Raymond, some one must go with you for your company on your return."

"If Mr. Butler is at liberty, I will not object to his attendance," returned Jessie, with as much precision as Mrs. Butler's own manner of speaking, and with sufficient emphasis to signify that Mrs. Butler's company would not be agreeable.

"Mr. Butler has a particular engagement this morning, but I doubt not will find some one to accompany you, if you still

persist in going," responded Mrs. Butler, with more than usual urbanity.

"My carriage is ordered, but I beg you will not put Mr. Butler to an unnecessary trouble in finding me a gallant," said Jessie, as she left the parlor to procure her bonnet and shawl.

"Jessie," said Emma, who followed her from the room, "for the purpose of gratifying me, do not offend Mrs. Butler. She has it in her power to annoy you, as much as you can her; do not provoke her lectures, and you will escape them."

"The preface of a lecture from Mrs. Butler is enough for one morning; and do not, Emma, vex our last hours by assuming that good lady's exclusive prerogative."

"Only for your sake," interposed Emma, deprecatingly.

"Nonsense! I can take care of a dozen Mrs. Butlers. Don't go off with that sad, pleading face, or you will make me promise, without asking, to be a very, very good girl."

"Miss Graham's carriage is at the door," announced her footman, interrupting the parting colloquy.

"I am most happy for your and Mr. Dwight's company our first stage," said Henry, as he met the ladies at the parlor entrance.

"Mr. Dwight," repeated Jessie, "his company is as unexpected as—"

A look of pain from Emma interrupted the sentence upon her lips, and she added, in a low tone, "to save you this needless grief, I will even endure him." And no objection was made to Mrs. Butler's very kind and prudential arrangement.

The two ladies were too much occupied with each other, during the ride out, to be much annoyed that the cavalier guard was not of their own choosing; and the parting adieux of those who anticipate meeting again within a few weeks, are not like the sad hour when friends part with the meeting far in the future, and perhaps never. But there was sufficient warmth in the last farewell, and the tears which imagination begat of apprehension, from the fact that a parting had not been anticipated, to provide Mr. Dwight with a text for his discourse during their return ride.

"It seems strange to me, Miss Graham," said he, in reference to the deep feeling which she had exhibited in parting with Emma, "with such a fount of the warmest affections, that you are content to dissipate their freshness upon the careless crowd."

"I do not understand you," she replied; "that I greet those whom I do not dislike, warmly and kindly, does not appear to me like lavishing the depths of my affections upon the heartless. That I do not dislike them, is no argument that I love

them with a deeper feeling than common courtesy and civility demand."

"True," he continued; "but those who are satisfied with general adulation, too frequently waste the best treasures of their heart where they may not be garnered up again."

"Have you taken a lesson from our dear Mrs. Butler, sir? would you teach me to be selfish, and only give in kind and quantity as I receive? and because the whole world loves me not, I must not love that? Fie! fie! I shall hand you over to Mr. Butler, to take a lesson in benevolence and philanthropy."

"I plead guilty—perhaps it is selfishness which prompts my warning. Where I would be first, I cannot bear that the whole world should be treated with equal and perhaps more deference than my self."

"Have I ever failed in due respect?" asked Jessie, with counterfeit astonishment, forgetting the emphatic part of his remark, "if so, please attribute it to—anything but a want of proper appreciation of your character."

"I do not complain of a want of respect. But, Miss Graham, you cannot have remained ignorant of the deep interest with which I have watched your conduct. I have endeavored to restrain it, that my actions might not militate against the wishes of your respected uncle. But circumstances which I cannot explain, and which I understand better than yourself, have convinced me that Mr. Burton's desire for your union with his adopted son will never be realized. Hence, released from implied obligatory considerations for Mr. Burton's wishes, I may now plead my own suit, and leave with you the decision."

"Have you thought of the wide dissimilarity of our minds, tastes, and tempers, Mr. Dwight, before soliciting my decision of so important a question?"

"The effervescence of youth and health, which now animates you, and at times carries you beyond the bounds of my approval, will naturally pass away; and beyond that, I do not see any cause for mutual dissatisfaction."

"Indeed, your compliments are anything but flattering. Do you suppose that as I grow old, I shall become insipid and dull?"

"Not insipid and dull; but more wise and thoughtful."

"If wisdom is but another name for cold selfishness; and thought means but a dull, prosy, philosophizing view of life, I fear I never shall learn it."

"You judge rashly now. Happiness does not consist in the wild tumult of passion, but in the quiet and proper discharge of duty. Could I but win you for my wife, I should not fear, but with judicious man-

agement you would prove all that my heart wished. Nay, start not, with that impatient gesture—the husband owes it to his wife, as much as to himself, to be the head and ruler of his family. And these things ought to be considered beforehand, that they may cause no disagreement afterwards. I may woo coolly, but I would woo with judgment and reason, rather than passion."

"You have hardly shown your usual cool judgment, Mr. Dwight," returned Jessie gravely, "in selecting me as the subject to honor with the offer of your hand and name."

"It may surprise you, but—" he commenced.

"Nay," she interrupted, with more meaning in her manner than she had before betrayed; "I am not so much surprised that you have done it now, as, that I have not been honored with a declaration of your intentions a long time ago."

"But Mr. Burton's intentions were opposed to mine, and as an honorable man, I was—"

"Ah! I mistook—I perceive you have acted perfectly in character. Your interest for me has been like that of a cat for a mouse—if another one did not catch me, you intended to do so."

"You are disposed to be sarcastic. I do not see wherein I have merited it. A lady who has received the greatest compliment a gentleman can pay her, the offer of his hand and heart, will at least treat him civilly and kindly."

"I had not supposed a heart included in the bargain. If I understood aright, it was the offer of a hand, name, and master—one who could teach me the duties of obedience."

"I may have been unfortunate in the selection of the terms to convey my meaning; but when a gentleman offers his hand and name (although it may be as a master), it is always to be supposed that the possession of his heart was a previous surrender."

"But not in this case."

"Why do you make the present an exception?"

"Because I have very strong testimony that the gentleman never had one."

"Miss Graham, your language is severe, and to me inexplicable. I must ask an explanation. If my suit had been offensive, there were other ways than this cruel manner to refuse it—and you could not have mistaken my feelings months gone by. Have I," he added, bitterly, "been made the sport of a heartless jilt?"

"Not heartless—but actuated as I have been with a spirit of revenge, it is my only regret, that the subject has been so reasonably unimpressible. I frankly acknowl-

edge, if it had been in my power, I would have humbled you as cruelly as you did me a few years since."

"Our acquaintance does not date back so far."

"Our acquaintance has a date anterior to the time we met. Do you remember receiving an anonymous letter, some few years since, from a lady?"

"Your question brings up something scarce remembered for a day. But you do not excuse your treatment towards me, in the present instance, because I declined sustaining an anonymous correspondence?"

"Not wholly: but that refusal provoked this treatment. If it had not been for that, I presume, I should have dismissed your suit as quietly and soon as I could; but, independent of that, you would have been refused. Fire and ice could never assimilate. But to return to that letter. I have no excuse or apology for writing it. I did so, I suppose, because the whim took my fancy. I had listened to your praises from Mr. and Mrs. Butler, until, to my young imagination, you were little less than a demi-god. I pictured you all that was excellent, noble, and generous, and I wished for the counsel of such a friend. That we had never met, nor probably ever should, but enhanced my respect. You were not to me as a man, but the embodiment of wisdom, kindness, and prudence. If I had been older, or had mixed more in general society, the spell which imagination invested you with would have been broken; I should then have known, that even the best of men were not free from the weaknesses of humanity; but this is a lesson which the young do not learn from history or biography. There, good men's virtues are recorded, and their weaknesses forgotten, or passed over. But my uncle and Mr. Butler were almost the extent of my acquaintances with gentlemen. From my uncle, I was constantly irritated with lectures about Tom and my grandmother; and if I flew to Mr. Butler with my grievances, he was sure to say nothing detrimental to my uncle's plans, and Mrs. Butler, you well know, never counseled aught but proper subjection to the authorities that be, whether a father, uncle, or husband. I wrote that letter with a wild hope, that from your excessive goodness I should gain some advice either to reconcile me to my uncle's intentions, or to strengthen my opposition with reasonable argument. Of course, I did not dare explain all this in my first communication; but I thought I could judge from your reply how far I might venture, and when it would answer to make you my confidant. The answer came, and perhaps was but a just rebuke for my presumption; but even my matured judgment tells me that a gentleman would

"Me! I am no gallant to any woman, much less to a gaudy butterfly. But what do you intend shall be the finale of your flirtations?"

"Not being possessed of your extraordinary information upon past, present, and future events, it is impossible for me to say."

"Sauce-box! I am no wizzard."

"Only a magician."

"Well then, shall I divine or ask whether Mr. Dwight improved the opportunity of his ride to make his declaration?"

"Pardon me, but declaration of what—war?"

"No; the honor he intended you."

Jessie could not forbear a laugh at the old gentleman's perfect apprehension of the matter: but she replied with the evasive query,

"Did he intend me some very great honor?"

"Pshaw! don't be a dunce, and think to deceive me with that simple don't know air—I know."

"If you did; I might be pardoned for inquiring why you sought information of me," returned Jessie, piqued by the old gentleman's contemptuous manner.

"Now don't get in a pet," pursued the old man; "I know you have refused three offers in as many weeks, that there are not three unengaged women in Saratoga but what would have taken, at least, time for consideration."

"But if I knew my own mind, why should I have asked time for farther thought?"

"To have kept them dangling after you."

"There are enough left for that."

"Not satiated yet; still each new face creates some new emotion. But whom do you intend to marry? there is a chance for a better selection here, than in the seclusion of your Virginia home."

"Whomsoever the gods provide."

"Mr. Howard," said a young gentleman, approaching, "I am opposed to monopolies; if their mastodon strides continue, they will destroy our free and equal right in search of happiness. Have you any extenuation to offer for monopolizing the whole of Miss Graham's conversation, and keeping her secluded within the shade of this truant drapery?"

"None whatever, but that I would shield her from the contamination of evil communications."

"Monopolies ever beget a spirit of injustice," returned the young gentleman; "and I must destroy yours, and give the world its brightest star again—if the lady consent," he added, presenting his arm.

"I will test whether it is the spirit of philanthropy or selfishness that is your greatest incentive, by withdrawing," said

the old gentleman, rising and walking quickly away.

"Now that I have driven the dragon away," said the young man, pausing, "my selfishness prompts me to beg that you will again be seated; for it is too much to give the world our greatest pleasure."

"No, no," returned Jessie; "I must not allow your philanthropy to be impeached." And they mingled with the crowd.

## CHAPTER XXI.

A FEW days after the events recorded in the last chapter, Mr. Butler was surprised by receiving a letter from Mr. Burton, announcing his intention of joining their party in their farther sojourn at the north. "You need not reply," was the closing sentence, "for it would meet me midway, and I shall be with you within two days after the reception of this."

"What is in the wind now," said Jessie, as she finished the perusal of the letter. "Is he going to bring Tom with him? for I can think of nothing else which would possess sufficient power of attraction to drag him from home."

"I think not," replied Mr. Butler with a smile, exchanging a significant glance with Mrs. Butler.

"Well, where is Mr. Howard? he knows everything, and perhaps can comprehend uncle's last whim."

"Miss Graham," interposed Mrs. Butler, "I cannot approve your extreme confidence and familiarity with even Mr. Howard. He is undoubtedly an honorable and worthy old gentleman; but from his eccentricities you may imbibe improper views of life."

"He has been as a father to me," replied Jessie, warmly, "frankly reproving my faults, and I should sooner think of learning an *impropriety* from you, than wrong of him."

"My dear," said Mr. Butler, interposing, "you need have no fear of Jessie's imbibing erroneous views from Mr. Howard. With all his eccentricities, I do not know of a man whom I more highly esteem."

Mrs. Butler, if she never performed any very meritorious act, never did positive wrong; perhaps, more because it was improper, than from any very high sense of justice; and among her negative virtues, the one that she never differed with her husband before a third person, was very prominent; and the subject was dropped.

"Mr. Howard," said Jessie, when she met him, "I have received an astounding piece of intelligence."

"Pray what? has your canary-bird died, or your pet pigeon flown away?"

"More wonderful than that—my uncle joins us within two days."



"Whew! then I am off—"

"Off! why?"

"One grumbler is enough for any one place—and if he and I should meet, we should quarrel in earnest. And I am not quite ready for that."

"Nay, you mean not as you say—you only wish to alarm me. But oh," she continued, clasping her hands in the ecstasy of her anticipations, "there will be such rich fun when you and uncle meet. He is positive; you severe. He never adopts any new opinions; and you will not let him rest until you have convinced him of the fallacy of every one he ever entertained."

"Keep your delight until we do meet—and I tell you, it is not this week."

"Are you serious?" asked Jessie, scanning the old man's face closely.

"Am I in the habit of saying one thing and doing another?"

"Then," said she, "Saratoga will be more lonely than a desert."

"You boast that you have dangles enough left."

"But I want one truth-teller."

"And will you regret the old cynic's departure?"

"More than any one who has left, or will leave," she replied, laying both hands upon his open palm.

"God bless you!" he returned, in a tone so low that the words were scarcely articulate, pressing her hands affectionately within his own. And then turning abruptly on his heel, he departed without another word.

And within another hour, the eccentric old man was miles from Saratoga.

"Can there have been any old disagreement between him and uncle?" asked Jessie of Mr. Butler, as they were discussing Mr. Howard's abrupt departure.

"I cannot think it probable," returned Mr. Butler. "Mr. Howard has been absent from the United States for many years (since he was quite a young man, I think), and has been returned but a very short time—within the present season. It is hardly possible, from Mr. Burton's home life, that they have ever met."

"I think otherwise. He once told me that he had known my mother."

"Your mother! then that accounts for the deep interest, and even tenderness, which he has manifested in you. But surely you learned when and where?"

"No; he refused to answer my questions, and you are aware how useless it was to urge him when he had resolved to be mysterious."

"Well; we cannot solve the mystery—perhaps when Mr. Burton comes, he can give us some light."

But when Mr. Burton did come, he could not give any information; he said that he

never had known any Mr. Howard, and the subject was even a greater mystery to him than to the others.

"Uncle," said Jessie, a few hours after his arrival, "I suppose I must express my gratitude for your very unnecessary presents and outfit, or you will never make me any necessary ones. But, undoubtedly, you ordered it for home use, although you kindly sent it on here in my name, to assist in the éclat of my début in the fashionable world. Shall I order the carriage that you may judge whether Messrs. Sinclair and Company have answered your instructions?"

"Order what carriage? and who are Mr. Sinclair and his company?" responded Mr. Burton.

"Oh, don't think I was grateful enough to overpower your modesty with thanks; for I did think it foolish, and was almost vexed about it—but will you see it, and pass your approbation upon your agent's taste and judgment?"

"What! is the girl's head turned with fashionable folly? or do you think to greet your old uncle with ironical taunts, because he has not sent you a carriage to play the fool in? If your grandmother were alive, she would have taught you better manners and more respect."

"But have you not sent me a carriage, horses, and servants?"

"Zounds, girl! have done with this fooling."

"Mr. Burton," interposed Mr. Butler, "I am at as much loss as Jessie for the cause of this passion. If she was not very grateful for the splendid outfit which you instructed to have forwarded, I fear, it was because she was too proud of it to fully understand her own feelings."

"Are you crazy? what outfit do you mean, sir?"

"The carriage, horses, and servants from New York."

"Carriage! I never gave her any carriage, but a baby-go-cart—nor hor—"

"Did you not order the firm of Sinclair and Company to forward to me for Jessie's use, a splendid barouche, with horses, servants, and so forth?" demanded Mr. Butler in a serious tone, but expressive of astonishment.

"Never! sir. I did not know that there was a firm of that name in New York."

"Then, here is another mystery, more inexplicable than Mr. Howard's," returned Mr. Butler, and he went on to explain the arrival of the servants with the horses and carriage, and to show Mr. Burton the letters from Messrs. Sinclair and Company, and also from the bankers, Paine, Wiley, and Knight.

"Well, well," said the old gentleman, as he raised his spectacles, after glancing at the letters; "this is a mystery. And

who are you, miss, to receive such nabob presents!" he added, turning to Jessie.

"Your niece, the protégé of fairies. But as a compliment to your taste and judgment, I would have your approbation of my turn-out. May I order the carriage?"

"Not till I know who it came from—and you shall pack it back to Mr. Sinkle and his company."

"My dear sir," interposed Mrs. Butler, "would it not cause remarks improper to be attached to a young lady's name, to publish that such magnificent presents had been sent her incog.? Would it not be better to wait until the donor makes himself known, and then you can refuse for her the obligations of such munificence."

"Well, well; there is something in that—but I won't have her prancing round with a carriage and horses that come from—I don't know where."

"I think Mrs. Butler's suggestion a good one," remarked Mr. Butler; "and in the meanwhile, not to compromise your own independence, nor commit Jessie farther, we can proceed immediately to Niagara, leaving the horses and carriage in charge of the servants here."

"And who is going to pay the expenses? I am not going to waste money for such expensive mummery."

"The donor, whoever he may be, evidently did not intend you should, by the deposit at the banker's," returned Mr. Butler.

"And have you drawn any of it out?" asked Mr. Burton, turning to Jessie, with increased passion.

"Certainly; I could not see any good it would do there, and I could find a thousand uses for it; and I—"

"Where is it, girl! return it! return every dollar of it—I can find you all I want you to have."

"I approved of Jessie's sending an order for three hundred dollars," interrupted Mr. Butler, kindly avowing his approval, to moderate the old gentleman's wrath; "out of it, I have paid the extra expenses of the horses, servants, and so forth, and the remainder she has in her keeping. But when we return through New York, perhaps, we may be able to obtain some clue to the affair, and then we can better decide upon what course to pursue. But, with your approbation, we will start for Niagara in the afternoon train."

The matter was arranged according to Mr. Butler's suggestions; and in the afternoon they departed for Niagara, leaving Mr. Dwight at Saratoga, who excused himself from further attendance in their leav, upon the plea of business, which would demand his presence at his home in the north within a few days.

Mr. Burton had been disappointed in not meeting Carlton at Saratoga, but from Mr.

and Mrs. Butler's report, had not deemed it advisable to tax Jessie with continued peevishness.

"I'll have him with us again, before we go home," said he, at the close of their conference, "and then, if the young scapegoat don't say something, I'll make him. To be bothered with such obstinate chits! well, well; if their grandmother had lived, she would have trained them to better obedience."

Mr. Butler, aware of the good old gentleman's veneration for his mother's government, offered no opposition to his hypothesis, and the subject was not continued.

## CHAPTER XXII.

WHEN they reached Rochester, as they were entering on board the boat which would convey them to Lockport, Jessie heard a voice exclaim, "Miss Graham!" and, upon turning to see who named her, met the earnest, speaking face of Mrs. Walker. She immediately extended her hand in recognition, at the same time expressing her surprise that the widow had not reached her distant home.

"But, Miss Graham," returned Mrs. Walker, "you forget that by traveling slower, the poor can economize their expenses." And she went on to explain that by traveling in the freight boats, or "line boats," as she called them, the expenses were curtailed nearly one half, and the time more than doubled; "and time," she added in conclusion, "can sometimes be expended with more economy than money."

"Ah, I understand," replied Jessie, "but as we go on a boat now, do you not go by the same conveyance?"

"I was looking for a line boat," returned Mrs. Walker; "the packets are too expensive, if I can go cheaper—and, of course, you go on the packet."

"I suppose so," said Jessie, turning a moment aside, and speaking in a low tone to her uncle, who was waiting for her.

"Certainly, certainly," was his reply to whatever her request might be, and he advanced nearer to Mrs. Walker.

"Mrs. Walker," continued Jessie, again addressing her, "my uncle, Mr. Burton, has joined me, since you left Saratoga; and let me hope that you will give us your company on the packet, that he may have the pleasure of making your acquaintance."

"Yes, yes," added Mr. Burton, extending his hand, and grasping Mrs. Walker's cordially; "you must not say no to Jessie's request, as I make it a point that all her reasonable requests shall be granted, as they are not near as numerous as her unreasonable ones. You must be my guest

as far as our ways lie in the same direction—have you any baggage?"

Mrs. Walker hesitated.

"If uncle says so," said Jessie, taking the perplexed woman's arm, "there is no demur. He is the most positive man in existence."

"But—" commenced Mrs. Walker.

"There is no *but* about the matter," interrupted Mr. Burton, "if you are ready to go our way. But the boat is nearly ready to start: if your baggage is not here, let me send my man for it.—Where will he find it?"

Thus compelled, Mrs. Walker gave the necessary directions.

"Cato," continued Mr. Burton to the servant who was attending to his baggage; "go and get this lady's trunks, and be back in no time." And he repeated the necessary directions; and the negro departed as if he intended to literally fulfill his master's commands, and return in "no time."

In the cabin Mrs. Walker found Mr. and Mrs. Butler, who had preceded Mr. Burton and Jessie a few moments in their progress from the hotel to the boat. Both expressed much surprise in meeting the widow; and Mr. Butler, from inclination as well as duty, and Mrs. Butler, from the instinct of propriety, entered into appropriate inquiries and conversation with Jessie's humble protégé.

When they reached Lockport, Mr. Burton, from natural kindness, insisted that Mrs. Walker should go round by the Falls.

"You will reach Buffalo," said he, "nearly as quick, and beside, catch a glimpse of the Falls, which many think worth coming a thousand miles to see."

And as Mr. Burton was a positive man, he carried his point. During the journey, and the one day which Mrs. Walker remained at the Falls, her quiet descriptions of western life amused the party, and highly excited Jessie's imagination.

"I certainly believe," said she, playfully, to her uncle, "that I should do the world more good by going home with Mrs. Walker and turning school-mistress, than I should by even marrying Tom."

"You would teach, I fear," he returned, laughing, "the young idea to shoot awry."

"No, no," she continued, archly; "with the bright example which has been set before me, I should teach them all to remember and respect the admonitions of their grandmother."

"I wish I could you," he responded, as he left the room.

After Mrs. Walker's departure, which was on the second day after their arrival, the party commenced a general, minute exploring expedition of the beauties and lions of nature's sublime wonder, and its environs. And, upon their return from "Lundy's Lane" they were surprised, and

Jessie annoyed, to see Mr. Ware sitting upon the piazza.

Mr. Butler greeted him and introduced Mr. Burton; and Mrs. Butler made inquiries for his lady's health, and learned they were staying at the "Clifton House" on the "Canada side." His and Jessie's salutations were as cold and haughty as might have been anticipated from the past, and the natural characteristics of both.

Their interview was short, but in the evening the gentlemen met him again, and Mr. Burton was fascinated with his polished manners and varied conversation.

The next day Mr. Burton excused himself from the fatigue of the search for the beautiful and sublime; and he had scarce finished the morning papers, before Mr. Ware joined him, and the return of the party only interrupted their conversation, when Mr. Ware took his leave.

The morning after Mr. and Mrs. Butler, accompanied by Mr. Burton, paid their respects to the fair bride; but Jessie excused herself upon the plea of a headache—that never-failing plea with woman, when she decides to make truth only a distant and respectful obeisance.

Several days passed, and from pure accident, or strange sympathy, much of Mr. Burton's time had been spent in the company of the all-fascinating Mr. Ware; and the latter gentleman had not failed to discover the weak side of the credulous old man. He had drawn from him Jessie's previous history, his resolution that she should never become the heir of his wealth, unless she also accepted the adjunct of his foster-son, and his obstinate intention that that union should take place, whether the parties consented or not.

From all this, it required no very superior penetration to see that the old man was blindly credulous, unreasonably obstinate, and weakly passionate; and where this union of characteristics is found, it is ever allied with a weak judgment. But withal, Mr. Burton was a pure-minded, generous man, sensitively alive to his fair fame, and the very mirror of honest and true intentions. And his own truth was too prominent to suspect others of duplicity and falsehood, when their speech was fair, and the sentiments which they uttered upright. He did not suspect himself, but suspicion was easily infused into his mind by others, and when once aroused, his obstinacy made it difficult to convince him that his easy belief had been imposed upon.

Mr. Ware read all this with an eagle eye, and the better to further his purposes, affected a very high estimation for Mr. Butler and lady, and, from his finished address, threw a polished familiarity over the mere ceremony of their intercourse, and established an intimacy, which had

been wanting in their previous acquaintance at Saratoga.

Mr. Butler, entirely ignorant of the actual state of matters between Jessie and Mr. Ware, attributed Mr. Ware's overtures as the effect of marriage, which had sobered down the effervescence of general gallantry to the staid reality of fixed life, and pleased with the propriety of the gentleman's conduct, did not reject the proffered intimacy.

But Jessie was almost ever excused from meeting the newly married pair. A headache, an engagement, or some excuse, actual or invented, prevented her from profiting from their companionship. But yet she managed the matter adroitly, and her friends never suspected that the will was wanting; and when, accidentally, she did meet them, although her manner was unnaturally cold and haughty, from the punctilious formality of her politeness, yet there was nothing omitted, to cause a lecture, even from Mrs. Butler.

"Miss Graham avoids myself and lady," said Mr. Ware to Mr. Burton, in one of their confidential chit-chats.

"Not intentionally, I beg you to believe, sir," returned Mr. Burton. "She scrambles so much over the rocks and ledges here, that, from pure fatigue, she denies herself the pleasure of your society."

"Perhaps so," replied Mr. Ware, with a careless smile playing around his mouth, "but I must beg leave to draw a very different conclusion."

"Why," rejoined Mr. Burton, laughing, "did your fair lady forestall my lively juicebox in your affections? (for I believe there is generally a lover, or one wanted, when young ladies pout). But let me thank her, if she did; for I should have trembled for Carlton's prospects, if you had bowed the knee."

"I never should have injured Mr. Carlton's prospects," returned Mr. Ware, proudly, and speaking with a marked emphasis.

"I do not understand you," said Mr. Burton, looking perplexed.

"It is better you should not," returned Mr. Ware, abruptly turning away.

But the barb was shot—a painful curiosity was awakened in Mr. Burton's mind, and he vainly endeavored to suggest some cause for Mr. Ware's words and manner.

"Was there any difference between Mr. or Mrs. Ware and Jessie, at the springs?" he asked of Mr. Butler, a few hours afterwards.

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Butler; "but I noticed they were never so cordial after Mr. Ware's horse ran away with Jessie; and immediately after, he became very devoted to his lady (then Mrs. Adams), which I supposed was the cause of his ceasing to act as Jessie's gallant."

"But you don't think she ever cared anything more about him, than any other pleasant and agreeable gentleman, do you?" continued the old man.

"You may rest assured that she did not; from some cause he never was a favorite. Had Mr. Howard been a young man, you might have feared for your hopes respecting Carlton."

"Mr. Howard!" repeated the old man, testily; "I wish I knew who Mr. Howard was. I am sure there must have been something wrong about him, or he would not have run away to avoid me."

"I do not think he went away to avoid you, although, possibly, he might fear you as a rival, in demanding Jessie's obedience."

"It was evident, from Jessie's story, that he left to avoid meeting me; but I'll find this out."

"Why do you dislike and avoid Mr. and Mrs. Ware?" he asked of Jessie, as his next essay to unravel the mystery of Mr. Ware's remark.

"Avoid them," she repeated, "because they always will call when I have the headache, or am weary, or engaged."

"But you have never called upon them."

"Oh, they belong to another kingdom; and gossiping visits are, or ought to be, contraband articles."

"Pshaw! that is no reason—I am in earnest. Your grandmother would have taught you that even mere visits of ceremony should be returned. You ought to have gone with Mrs. Butler."

"You forget that I blistered my toe the day before, and was obliged to decline, for fear I should go limping into the presence of the fair bride, which, you know, would not have been manners."

"Well, well; you ought to have called, when you went over to see the other side of the Falls. I fear your marked neglect may give offence."

"I should have given offence, to have called at that time—first covered with dust, and then dripping from the spray. Why, uncle, I looked like the mermaid out a mudpuddle."

"But you must call, or I shall think you envy Mrs. Ware her fascinating husband, and feel vexation that you were not the lady of his choice."

"Envy her!" repeated Jessie, proudly, and then relapsing into her former bantering tone; "but what do you suppose would have become of poor Tom, if I had been the lady of his choice?"

"I am glad you were not; but I cannot understand why you dislike them. I do not know of two persons possessed of more agreeable manners, united with the same excellences—"

"Oh, I will admit them both superior and most excellent in their way," inter-

rupted Jessie, "but don't fret me with a catalogue of their virtues, for I am off for the 'Cave of the Winds.'"

"And remember to-morrow, you accompany me to call upon Mrs. Ware."

"I cannot promise, for perhaps, in my present adventure, I shall break my neck."

"If it is dangerous you shall not go."

"Not half so dangerous as to cross the ferry; but there is no knowing what may happen, and I added the caution that you might remember my word was not pledged. And I am quite sure something will happen," she added, with a gay laugh as she was leaving the room, "if it is nothing but an earthquake."

"You are gay this morning, Miss Graham," said Mr. Ware, who was at the same moment entering the door.

"I am seldom otherwise," returned Jessie, coldly.

"Good morning, sir," said Mr. Burton, coming instantly forward; "I have just been making an appointment with Jessie to call upon your lady—how is she this morning?"

"No engagement for me," said Jessie, looking back with a mingled expression of defiance and archness; "remember I have prophesied both broken bones and an earthquake."

"Let me beg, sir," said Mr. Ware in his blandest tones, turning to Mr. Burton, "that Miss Graham may not be importuned upon this subject. I would rather forego the honor of her visit, than it should cause you any vexation." And there was a slight emphasis upon the word honor, which annoyed Mr. Burton.

"I beg you will not attribute my niece's carelessness to intentional," he began.

"And I beg this subject may be dropped," interrupted Mr. Ware; "you do not understand Miss Graham's character, if you have yet to learn that she would break a bone before yielding in a question where her mind was decided."

"There is something in this, which I do not comprehend," pursued Mr. Burton, "and as my niece's guardian, I must ask it explained. If she has been guilty of any willful rudeness towards yourself or lady, accept my apologies and regrets. Her spirits sometimes carry her beyond the bounds of exact courtesy."

"You mistake, Mr. Burton," rejoined Mr. Ware hastily, irritated at the old gentleman's want of comprehension, "neither myself or wife have any complaint or objection to Miss Graham's open dislike of us. We—but pardon me; to you, sir, I cannot explain. We entertain the highest estimation of your excellence and worth, and also of your friends Mr. and Mrs. Butler."

"And has my niece forfeited your esteem? for I perceive you carefully exclude her name."

"My dear sir, I am pained by the introduction of this subject, and earnestly entreat that you will forget that it has been named between us."

"I shall do no such thing," returned Mr. Burton warmly, "I must insist upon a full explanation, for I do not well see how any enmity could have been engendered between my niece and yourself."

"I assure you there is no enmity upon our part—pity were a fitter term—but I must insist that this subject be dropped."

"Never, sir!" replied the old man, firmly: "your words imply fault or blame in my niece; and I insist—nay, demand an explanation."

"It is an explanation which I cannot give."

"Then, sir, you are no gentleman!"

"Sir!"

"I repeat it—a man who will imply evil of a young girl, and refuse her nearest relative and guardian an explanation of his words, is no gentleman!"

"Sir, in respect to your age, I bear with your wrath, and my refusal arose from an earnest desire to save you pain. Every word I have uttered has escaped my lips involuntarily, and I, as much as yourself, regret they have been spoken."

"They have been said, and now cannot be unsaid; and if you are a gentleman, animated by a sentiment of respect for another's right, I demand a full and satisfactory explanation of their meaning."

"Then, sir, you must acquit me of blame—I would have saved you from deep sorrow; and—"

A gesture of impatience from Mr. Burton interrupted his well-feigned regrets.

"At least, sir, not here," he continued; "we should be interrupted by Mr. and Mrs. Butler—will you walk? and then—"

"No," returned Mr. Burton, with compressed lips; "I have a private appointment." And they left the room together.

We cannot repeat the conversation which ensued. Suffice it to say, Mr. Ware, by insinuations rather than assertions, accused Jessie of a dereliction from propriety and virtue. Mr. Burton at first was indignant, but as he listened to the wily answers of the evil-minded man (for Mr. Ware made it appear that every word he uttered was wrung from him by the importunate questioning of the old man), his suspicion was excited and gradually grew into conviction, as proof of the tale was adduced in the unfortunate present of the carriage and horses; a fact, which, several days before, and now in his excitement forgotten, Mr. Burton himself had communicated to his fiendish companion.

"But," said Mr. Burton, "they were sent in my name to Mr. Butler."

"Sent by the guardian of Miss Graham," remarked Mr. Ware.

"My name was used that the present might not be rejected."

"Was your *name* used? I did not so understand it—and I do not imagine that the donor had any fear of his presents being rejected."

"My name was not used," said Mr. Burton, beginning to comprehend the omission, "but the letters said by 'the guardian of Miss Jessie Graham,' and she has none beside myself."

"Perhaps that lady thinks herself entitled by age to choose her own. But, Mr. Burton, neither you nor myself believe that we live in a fairy-land, where munificent presents, which cost thousands, are sent by unknown donors as mere tokens of admiration, and for nothing. It is a matter-of-fact age now, and men usually receive the worth of their money before they pay it out. And my own observation teaches me to believe that Miss Graham, at least, knows what source to thank for her carriage, horses, and servants.

"How so, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Burton, shocked and startled as much by the manner of Mr. Ware's speaking, as by the horrid insinuation which his words conveyed.

Mr. Ware had gained his point, and entered into an artful detail of past circumstances, and, with truth misrepresented and falsehood cunningly mingled, wove a web which would have required a person of much more acute perceptions than Mr. Burton to have detected the base untruth of the woof.

And did no emotions of pity visit the breast of that false fiend, as he witnessed the heart-crushing agony of his victim, prostrated by the horrid tale which he had related? No: there was another, the true victim, to be agonized and crushed—the daring girl who had braved his anger, and scorned and rejected his suit. Does the ruling spirit of Pandemonium weep at the misery which his arts and malice have created? No: evil rejoices in woe—the wicked raise a song of triumph when their successful schemes are about to degrade the pure and noble in the estimation of others to their own base level. And, perchance, there is no surer test of a truly cruel, selfish, and evil mind, than to rejoice when another is abased. The pure and generous pity even the fallen.

Mr. Ware remained with Mr. Burton until the first paroxysm of agony was passed, and by well affected sympathy and condolence, and hints of the unhappy girl's temper, made him promise not to repeat the more revolting parts of the tale.

"It will do no good," continued he, "and might drive her to throw herself upon the sole protection of her lover; and I am certain Mr. and Mrs. Butler do not suspect the truth."

"But what shall I do?" exclaimed the

suffering old man; "shall I tamely submit to disgrace and dishonor, and permit my ~~own~~ sister's child's wrongs to go unpunished?"

"By seeking to punish the accomplice, you publish the dishonor of your niece; rather withdraw her from the world's observation a few years, and the indiscretions of her youth will be forgotten. What I have told you is confined to the knowledge of a very few; but tax her with wrong, and she leaves your protection—seek to punish him who has led her astray, and you publish the matter to the world."

And he won upon the old man's credulity, and incited his fear of public disgrace, until he was sure no more would be repeated than was necessary for the successful accomplishment of his plot.

And what did he purpose? First, and the most essential; Jessie's disinheritance as her uncle's heiress; also, to create dissension between her and her uncle; to rob her of the confidence of her only relative; and he hoped from her high spirits, quick sense of injustice, and unmeasured indignation, that the contention would drive her forth unprotected into the world. He did not think—nor did he dare propose the measure—that Mr. Burton would throw her from him, and deny her the protection of his roof; but, from Jessie's proud spirit, he argued that she would not be indebted for protection and support, even to her uncle, without his affection and confidence.

And did Mr. Burton weakly believe a tale from the mouth of a solitary witness? He was a credulous old man, who, from the very openness of his own character, was the more easily imposed upon by the designing and artful; and the very high estimation which he believed Mr. and Mrs. Butler entertained for Mr. Ware, was received as presumptive evidence of his integrity. Beside, he could see no apparent motive to incite Mr. Ware to bear false testimony, and he rested on that axiom of common law, that a mass of circumstantial evidence, all tending to prove a certain point, was stronger testimony than a single witness unsupported. And here he had the single witness's positive testimony supported by the circumstantial evidence of facts of which he personally was cognizant. And with the subtle logician, to whom Mr. Burton had listened, to have argued the case, we question whether "twelve picked men, good and true," would not have convicted poor Jessie upon the same testimony. Simple truth, supported only but by its own merits, has but a poor chance in the hands of a shrewd, artful, and unscrupulous practitioner.

It was sufficient—Mr. Burton believed the tale; and let a man of weak intellect believe a thing, no matter how improbable.

and the proof is as positive as the sun at mid-day.

After Mr. Ware left him, he locked his door, and paced the room in a fever of anguish. At one moment he would resolve to upbraid Jessie with her shame, and cast her off forever. The next, he would shrink from the publicity of the disgrace, and decide to return home immediately, where the culprit should be immured from the sight of every human being, and left on meagre fare to repent her sins and shame.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

JESSIE returned from her perilous expedition without personal harm, or the earth's heaving with internal convulsions, and after a bath retired to her room; and too weary to finish her toilet in time, ordered her dinner to be sent up to her chamber. After dinner she threw herself upon the couch and lay until near the shades of evening, in that most blissful state of being, half sleeping, half waking, with the imagination busy in pleasant fancies.

She was aroused by her uncle's servant desiring admittance.

"Do you know, missus, what is the matter with master?" he asked abruptly; for being a favorite servant, he was wont, as is characteristic of his race, to believe the well-being and happiness of his master's whole family committed to his care.

"No," replied Jessie, "what makes you think anything is wrong?"

"Why, he hain't been down to dinner, and his door is locked, and he won't let me in."

"I presume he is laid down or writing, and does not wish to be disturbed."

"No, he hain't laid down nor writing, for he keeps walking jest as he does when he's in a passion—only he stops some time; and when he told me to go away, his voice didn't sound natral, but jest as if he was hoarse or crying."

"Nonsense! Cato, you would frighten me, and you always suppose your master is not safe if you do not inspect his condition every fifteen minutes."

"It's no nonsense, missus, and I wish you'd go and see what is the matter of him."

"And save your ears from a cuff for disturbing him."

"I wouldn't care about my ears, if I could get in; I know something is the matter—it ain't like master to lock his door—"

"And leave you on the outside," said Jessie, laughing at the affectionate negro's anxiety. "But come, I will see if I can get the door unlocked, and if not, will send for the doctor."

"In the passage she encountered Mr. Butler. "Is anything the matter with uncle?" she inquired.

"Not that I know of," returned Mrs. Butler; "why?"

"Cato has sought me with a dolorous account of uncle's door, and I have concluded that it was ill, and am going to pay it a visit—will you accompany me?"

Mrs. Butler accepted the laughing girl's invitation, and a moment brought them in front of Cato's grievance, upon which he knocked with a peremptory summons.

"Go away, Cato," said Mr. Burton, without unclosing the door, and his voice certainly sounded husky; "when I want you I will ring."

"It ain't me, master," replied the anxious negro, "it is Miss Jessie and Miss Butler who's come to see you."

"Excuse me, Mrs. Butler," said the old gentleman, opening the door, "I will join you, in your private parlor, in a few moments."

"What is the—" began Jessie.

But the old gentleman closed the door, before she finished her sentence.

The ladies looked at each other, and Cato turned from one to the other.

"Well," said Jessie, with a merry laugh, "if the mountain is coming to us, we may as well wait for farther information. But, Cato," she continued, as she turned to the wondering servant, "you see your master is safe, and don't throw yourself into a fever of astonishment, because he can dispense with your presence half an hour."

The perplexed negro shook his head; "I don't know," said he, murmuring wisely to himself; "something ain't right, but I'll find it out."

"From uncle's ominous look," said Jessie, as they reached the parlor, "I should think Tom was in the wind—he is never profoundly cross about anything else."

"I am at a loss to account for his mood," returned Mrs. Butler, "but we will not discuss the cause until he explains himself. It is not proper—"

"In mercy, Mrs. Butler!" interrupted Jessie, "do not give me a lecture upon propriety, when I am on the rack from curiosity. If you thrust a proper idea into my head now, it will crowd out my little patience and good-nature."

"Miss Graham," commenced Mrs. Butler, with one of her most awful formal expressions, "your impetuosity of character hurried you into expressions very improper and unlady-like; may I hope that you will learn to restrain it, and—"

"Yes," returned Jessie, petulantly, "when I have ceased to feel, and I have learned to regulate my pulse by fixed rules—but I am, in no mood to listen to a lesson on propriety, and encounter a harangue upon Tom. Good evening." And before Mrs. Butler

had concluded what reply was proper, Jessie was in her own room.

"Mr. Butler is not in," said Mr. Burton, as he entered, glancing around the apartment, and perceiving Mrs. Butler its only occupant.

"He has gone to walk," rejoined Mrs. Butler; "but will you not be seated?"

"I must be excused. I have decided that Jessie and myself will start for home within a day or two, and I thought I would announce my intention to Mr. Butler, and beg him to return by Saratoga, and see those things returned from whence they came."

"I hope no painful intelligence has caused you to return south thus suddenly. Cato was full of anxieties because you denied him admittance."

"He is always full of them, unless he is permitted to ransack my thoughts, even as he does my trunks. He grows presuming; I believe, I shall have to sell him."

"I am disposed to think he would dispute the validity of your transfer, and run back to you—"

"And then you would have to answer for harboring runaway slaves," added Jessie, who had entered the room unperceived, and had returned not exactly to say "I have been a naughty girl, will you forgive me," but to show by the recovery of her good-nature, that the generosity and frankness of her character were equal to its impetuosity.

"I would that I never had harbored anything worse," returned Mr. Burton to Jessie's remark.

"What, have you been guilty of giving bed and board to an abolitionist?" continued the laughing girl, disposed to arrive at the cause of her uncle's mood in her own way.

"No! to a viper!" answered the old man, with passionate vehemence.

Both ladies stared at the speaker in astonishment, and both remained speechless.

"Yes, a viper," continued Mr. Burton, with increasing passion; "and it came in the guise of my own sister's child!"

"You mean not what you say," returned Jessie, with hardly less warmth than her uncle; "wherein have I deserved such language?"

"Wherein?" repeated Mr. Burton, slowly, walking up to the indignant girl, and laying his hand upon her arm; "I know all—deception and airs are useless—tomorrow—"

"Know all!" repeated Jessie, interrupting him; "then you know that deception and my name are not synonymous terms, and—"

"Silence! girl!" interrupted Mr. Burton, with fresh vehemence, for the very intemperance of his passion had made his

manner for a moment calm; "I did not come to bandy words or terms with you; to-morrow, or the day after, we start for home, and it shall be my care that you no farther disgrace the name you bear."

Mrs. Butler sprang from her seat, where she had remained fixed in surprise at the scene, as Jessie started back, her whole frame quivering with indignation, and her eyes lightening with passion.

"Mr. Burton, I entreat—" commenced Mrs. Butler.

"No entreaty for me, madam," interrupted Jessie, in the majesty of outraged innocence and dignity; "these are words which I would not forgive a mother in uttering; and I never will cross the threshold of my youth's home, until what has now been said is fully explained and retracted."

"Ha! is it so?" cried the enraged old man; "you probably anticipate protection and support from the same source which furnished you with carriage and horses."

"This is as cruel as insulting," rejoined Jessie; "you know my ignorance of the source of those hateful presents; and if you do not, Mr. and Mrs. Butler's testimony is sufficient to establish the fact."

"I do not dispute their ignorance," returned Mr. Burton; "but when you assert yours, you assert a falsehood."

"This I will not bear from even you," interrupted Jessie; "your care of my youth, and undeviating kindness until the present time, cannot justify me in excusing such language. To all human authority there are limits: yours over me, from this moment, ceases, and as a wronged and injured woman, not as your niece or ward, I demand the cause of your present treatment. What have I done?"

"Done! done what you cannot undo by a life of regret and repentance—done! what my tongue would blister to repeat even to you."

"My God!" exclaimed Jessie, grief for the moment mingling with her indignation; "can you humble me to ask if you believe what you say? I appeal to Mrs. Butler, to witness to the purity of my conduct, although she may have accused me of sometimes violating the little details of ceremony."

"Miss Graham," returned Mrs. Butler, when thus appealed to; "if you had asked me to have expressed my conviction of the purity of your intention, I could have done so, with earnestness and truth; but of the propriety of all of your acts, I must hesitate before I can say that I approve them."

"There!" exclaimed Mr. Burton, pointing his finger in derision at the unhappy girl, as if even he could glory in her abasement.

"Thank God!" returned the excited girl, in phrensy of passion; "I believe there



are those in this world who value truth before the petty punctilios of idle ceremony, or I should blush for my kind! and I trust, before I again have the honor of standing before this tribunal, I shall see them." And she left the room so abruptly that she did not hear Mr. Burton's muttered rejoinder, "I'll see to that." Mrs. Butler remained silent. It might be that she felt a slight compunction of conscience for her cool testimony and its qualifying *but*, in Jessie's behalf. But it is a rare woman who will frankly and fearlessly defend one of her own sex, when suffering under accusation or suspicion of evil. And Mrs. Butler's impulses were so squared to the rules of decorum, that she had to wait to canvass her opinions before she could express them, or perhaps her evidence might not have been of so questionable import. Nor did she until afterwards fully comprehend the whole truth of the unhappy scene.

"Cato!" said Mr. Burton, as his eye, in following Jessie's exit, fell upon his servant waiting on the outside of the door, "attend my niece to her room, and bring me the key."

"Bring you the key, what can you want of the key of Miss Jessie's room? it won't unlock your door."

"Go!" interrupted his master, pointing; and the obedient slave instantly vanished.

"I beg you will not carry this to an extreme," said Mrs. Butler; "it will get noised over the house, and cause many improper remarks, and I think your information incorrect, if you have been led to believe your niece guilty of falsehood. Her fault is extreme frankness of speech and manner; she very improperly never thinks what she is going to do or say, or what others may say. She—"

"Shall learn that her old uncle is not to be fooled by her seeming simplicity," interrupted Mr. Burton, finishing Mrs. Butler's sentence. "But I do not want to discuss this matter farther; my mind is made up, and when that is the case, you well know it is useless to argue with me. Good evening; tell Mr. Butler, when he returns, that I wish to see him," he continued, stepping back into the room. "Excuse my abruptness. Good evening, again."

Jessie's extreme indignation at the injustice with which she had been treated, had sustained her during the interview; but she hardly reached her own door, before the most bitter sobs of grief and passion burst from her bosom. Could it be, that she, who an hour before was full of life, hope, and happiness, now stood desolate, friendless, and branded with shame! Even the strongest-hearted writhe in anguish under unexpected, unanticipated misfortune and evil; and Jessie groaned

in convulsive bitterness beneath the blows of injustice and cruelty.

She was aroused by a tap at the door.

At first, she did not heed it, but when it was repeated more peremptorily, she unfastened the lock, to ascertain the cause of the summons, and Cato's honest face, shining in sympathy or complexion, presented itself.

"Don't take on so, Miss Jessie," said the affectionate negro, as he stepped into the room; "I waited and waited at the door, till I was 'fraid master would be coming, or I would not have disturbed you. But don't take on so—master is in a passion, now, one of his terrible ones, but he will get over it. You don't know, Miss Jessie, how awfully he scolds at me sometimes, but he is just as good a little while arter."

"Thank you, Cato," returned Jessie, stifling her sobs, and compelling herself to acknowledge the faithful servant's attempt at condolence, "but your troubles with your master, and mine, are somewhat different."

"Why, yes, I know it; as it be, you're a lady, and I'm nothing but a black man. But master, when he has his fits, often tells me, I'm a shame and disgrace to him—and he didn't say any worse to you; only something about lying, and he never tells me—"

"Silence, fellow!" exclaimed Jessie, tortured to hear a menial canvassing the cause of her grief; where did you gain your information?"

"I beg you won't be angry, miss," entreated the humbled slave, "but you see, master's odd ways made me think something more than common was the matter, and I followed him to Mrs. Butler's room, and though the door was shut, I heard every word—I beg you won't be angry, Miss Jessie," he again entreated, seeing her eye flash and her gesture of impatience, "I know master is wrong, and I'll do anything you want me to do, if master hain't told me not to do it. I pity you, if I be a black man."

"Good God!" cried the agonized girl, "is it come to this!"

To be humbled before a servant; to stand alone, without one word of sympathy and kindness, save from a *slave*! She recoiled from his humble and warm-hearted consolation, and motioned for him to depart.

"I would be alone," she added, seeing he hesitated.

"But how will you fasten your door, Miss Jessie? master sent me to bring your key; but I forgot it, you was crying so."

"What? am I to be a prisoner?" questioned the angry girl, indignation mastering her humbled feelings.

"I hope not," returned the servant, a

smile parting his ebon lips; "master only told me to bring him the key, and I, sure I should not dare to lock your door, even if master did tell me to."

.. Cato's obedience to the letter of his master's command drew a smile from even the grief-stricken girl.

"I perceive," thought she, "I am indebted to you, rather than your master's intentions, for my freedom. The instincts of your native generosity and benevolence should make my—those whom I so lately left—blush. But go!" said she, "and send me the maid—"

"Who, Jane! she'll tell missis everything," interrupted Cato, fearing for his head or ears, in his implicit obedience to orders.

"No: the chamber-maid—you can find out which of the servants attend to this chamber—send her."

"Yes, miss," returned Cato, relieved.

"And come to me in the morning, before your master is up," she added as he was leaving the room.

"Yes, miss; and don't take on any more—it will all go right yet, I never knew it fail." And with this comforting assurance, or philosophy (which his betters often use for lack of more reasonable consolation), Cato departed.

And Jessie—what a whirlpool of contending thoughts crowded into her mind; and it were a question which predominated, grief or indignation. She reviewed the past, and while she did her uncle justice for all his care, in her present state of feelings, she attributed it to interested motives.

"As his sister's daughter, he could not refuse me his protection," thought she; "and while he regarded me as a candidate for his favorite's wife, it was well enough. But assured that he shall never coax, threaten, or intimidate me to accept my portion of his fortune through another's favor, now I am nothing but an interloper. He never loved me, and—who does?" was the next query, and she relapsed into a passion of tears, as she viewed her own loneliness. An orphan, with only one relative, and he disposed to demand obedience, without asking it as the offering of affection.

Had gentle, kind-hearted Emma been there, to have mingled her tears with her friend, and look her appeal for submission, it might have soothed the wronged girl, although it were a question whether it would have influenced her conduct.

She did not doubt but that Mr. Butler would in the end do her justice, but he would wait until her uncle's passion had cooled, before he argued the case. And who—who, among all that she knew, would brave her relative's and guardian's anger, and do her proud justice, without hesitat-

ing as to involving themselves in unpleasant consequences!

There was but one rose in her mind's eye, and he a stranger. Her thoughts reverted to Mr. Howard. And as she grew calmer, the query arose, who had poisoned her uncle's mind against her? There was but one who bore her malice and ill-will, and him she left with her uncle, when she went out in the morning.

"And could he," she exclaimed, starting up, "give credit to the malicious falsehood of a stranger, and doubt the evidence of years!—it is time we part."

"What did you wish, ma'am?" asked the chambermaid, entering the room.

"You have been a long while in answering my summons," returned Jessie, "but do you not have pass keys to the chambers? mine is misplaced, and I wanted one to fasten the door for the night."

"I didn't hear till a minit ago, ye wanted me, ma'am, and I am sure I came right off; but where can yere key be gone? I am sure I can find it."

"It is late, and I cannot have my room ransacked to-night," replied Jessie; "if you have a key, let me have it, and in the morning you can look for the other."

"Oh yes, ma'am, you can have the key; but be ye not kinder sick! yere voice does not sound nathral at all, ma'am. Let me get ye something; will ye have some warm tay?"

"No, no; all I want is rest," replied Jessie, impatiently. "And here," she added, slipping some silver into the servant's hand, "I would rather you would not say anything to any one about my key to-night; in the morning, I presume, it will be found."

"Thank ye, ma'am, and may the Lord bless you; and, surely, I'll not be after saying anything about the key's being found until it's lost."

And Jessie assured, if the servant literally kept her word, of silence upon the subject, fastened her door, and retired to think—to arrange, rather than sleep.

The more she reflected, the more decided she became, that the present was the parting hour between her uncle and herself. The climax of his injustice made her scorn his protection and support. She felt that his bread would choke her in swallowing; and her proud spirit claimed perfect independence. She would depend upon herself for the future, asking aid and protection from God only.

She was aware that her uncle would oppose the measure; nay, defeat it wholly if within his power. And she smiled bitterly as she thought of his safe keeping—of the key of her room.

"A prisoner, forsooth! he shall find that

'locks and bolts can no more bend my will, than fetter my person."

But she would not flee in the night like a felon from his guilt, but go forth boldly by morning light; and, if opposed, she felt that she could both assert and maintain her independence. The only feasible method which presented itself to carry her design into execution, was to follow her humble friend, Mrs. Walker, to her western home, and, in truth, become what, but a few days before, she had laughingly asserted, would make her a benefactress to the world, a "school-mistress." The responsibilities, trials, or vexations, were left without much consideration, as her prominent thought was relief from her present unhappy position; and, as she said in the morning, she was in a mood to produce an earthquake, if necessary to effect her object.

At daylight she fell into a light slumber, from which the summons of the faithful Cato aroused her. Hastily throwing on her dressing-gown, she opened the door. "You see," said she, with a smile, "that I found means to keep my door safe!"

"Yes, miss; and see, too, one of your own happy faces," returned the delighted fellow, cheered by her smile as by a sun-beam of light.

"Oh, I could not afford to spoil my eyes and beauty to please your master. I hope he has slept sound with my key under his pillow."

"But he did not keep it, miss; he told me to keep it, and to bring you your breakfast, for he did not want to expose the—I can't remember what he called it—but the locking the door, to the house-servants."

"I am certainly obliged for his care; but obey his orders, and bring me my breakfast at the first moment you can get it. And, in the meanwhile, ascertain at what hour the first train of cars leaves for Buffalo."

"But, miss, what do you mean? master is not going to Buffalo to-day."

"I did not ask information of your master's movements. Do as I bid you, unless your master has forbid your waiting upon me."

"Oh, no; he said I must wait upon you; but—"

"Then go!" but seeing his saddened face at her harsh tone, she added, "I thank you much, Cato, for all the kindness you mean, and shall ever remember your faithful and ready services; but go and hasten my breakfast."

Although her manner was firm, and her words almost light, her heart was heavy. She felt oppressed by the desolateness of her situation. Not an inquiry from Mr. or Mrs. Butler; did they suppose her a prisoner denied the communication of her friends?

She was too proud to inquire, and, by the time Cato returned with her breakfast, her trunks were packed (a new effort for her) and she had written her uncle a note enclosing the balance of the sum which she had drawn from the bankers in New York.

But her note will best explain itself:—

"In leaving you," she commenced, "I do not forget your care and kindness to my youth. But after what passed last night, I cannot drive the conviction from my mind (a suspicion which has often before been repelled as unjust to you), that your care has been bestowed upon your sister's daughter as a duty, rather than from affection to myself. In my mother's name I thank you for the past. But no act of my life can justify your conduct last evening, and that severs the bond between us. In this, my right equals yours, and I will no longer be dependent upon a grudging bounty. I feel that I have capabilities of sustaining myself, and I can exert them.

"Your evident intention of considering me a prisoner, shows that, instead of an uncle and guardian, for the future I may anticipate a jailer and governor. I have no disposition to test your fitness for either office, therefore, I promptly pursue the course which I have marked out for my future conduct. I ask no leave; only announce my departure. In so doing, I find I am compelled to remain your debtor for the balance of money which still remains in my possession, from the sum which you gave me when I left Virginia. My humble, faithful, kind-hearted Chole is my property, and, considered as chattels, is worth five times the amount of money which I take. I would not sell her for your plantation, but she is in your possession, and you may retain her as a pledge, until I can refund the money for which I consider *myself* the debtor; when, most assuredly, I shall claim her. Be kind to her. She was my mother's faithful servant, as well as mine.

"My clothes I retain. They are of use to me, and could be of no use to you.

"Enclosed is the balance of that money which accompanied those unfortunate presents. Do with it as you like; here is every dollar excepting what Mr. Butler expended as he informed you. And here, I solemnly reiterate that I am wholly ignorant, nor have I any suspicion of the source from which those presents came. And if it ever comes to light, you will then know how terribly you have wronged me.

"JESSIE."

When Cato returned with her breakfast, she merely inquired if he had ascertained the hour of the cars' departure; and when he answered in the affirmative, she de

sired him to be in attendance at the time.

"I know," muttered Cato to himself, as he traversed the passages, "there'll be some fuss. Master is always on the peaz-zah then; and Miss Jessie looks jest as if she would do as she was a mind to, master or no master. He is an old fool, believing somebody's trumpery stories, instead of his own eyes; but it's no use to argue with him when he thinks he's grand and awful; and all this child has got to do, is to keep out of trouble. Miss Jessie ain't afeard of the great, wicked, white man heself, when she gets her dander up; and master would horsewhip the same personage when he gets into one of his obnifusticated fits: let me think—Cato can't tell a lie, no how, and master mustn't be in sight when the cars go, or we shall have a white squall. I have it!" he exclaimed, clapping his hands in his ecstasy, "I can't tell a lie, but I can give some ragged white boy two shillings to tell me a story, and I can tell master I heerd so."

We are afraid there are a great many good white people who act upon Cato's theory. They would not word a falsehood for the world, but they act one without the least compunction of conscience.

Probably Cato found some "ragged white boy" to repeat his tale of convenience; for about three-fourths of an hour before the cars started, he appeared breathless in the presence of Mr. Burton.

"Master! master!" said he, "I met a boy running this way, and as quick as he see me, he stopped and told me that Mr. Ware had fallen down and hurt him badly—broke his leg, or neck, or something, and Missis Ware wants you and Mr. Butler to come over there directly—she's almost crazy."

"I'll go immediately," said Mr. Burton, starting up; "but where is the bearer of this intelligence?"

"He sat right down as quick as he told me—possible he was tired of running."

"I did not think of that; but go in quest of Mr. Butler, and deliver the message. Poor, poor man! and just married." And Mr. Burton hastened immediately towards the ferry.

"It was nothing but truth," muttered Cato; "the boy did tell me so; and I guess he was tired of learning his lesson as well as of running. I've no doubt but I should make a good schoolmaster—that boy was a fool; it took him more'n twenty times before he could say it right."

Cato found Mr. Butler, and delivered his message, and from the gentleman's thoughtfulness, or the servant's compassionate suggestions, Mrs. Butler accompanied her husband.

"There, they are all gone," said the clever manager of their departure, as he

watched them turn the corner, "and I don't think I shall ever like Missis Butler as well as I used to; she could start quick enough to go and see somebody she's not known as many weeks as she's known Miss Jessie years, because, as she said the poor thing was in trouble. I wonder what poor thing is in more trouble than Miss Jessie; but some folks' benevolence looks a great deal better in the street where enough can see 'em, than it does through dark passages where nobody can see 'em but a black man and some servant gals."

A few moments before the time, Cato appeared at Jessie's door.

"The cars are ready, miss—what is your commands?" he asked, sadness mingling with his satisfied expression of successful management.

"First, carry my trunks down to be put aboard the cars, then come back and attend me."

"I hope, Miss Jessie, you've thought of all you're going to do?"

"I have; and make haste and execute my commands."

"Well," muttered Cato, as he traversed the passages with a heavy trunk on his shoulders, "a black man has nothing to do but obey orders; but I reckon both master and Miss Jessie wouldn't be any worse if they'd listen to Cato."

"And what shall I say when master inquires for you?" asked Cato, when he returned to accompany his young mistress to the cars.

"Give him this," she replied, presenting him a package, "and tell him the truth; I believe you pride yourself upon your veracity."

"If you means telling truth, miss, I do Cato always tells jest the truth. And will you go home, miss?"

"It matters not where I go; but tell Chole to be good and faithful to your master, and that I hope the time will come, when I can send for her."

"Well, Miss Jessie, if you are going off, you don't know where, I'm sorry you've no one but me to wish you well; but God bless you, miss; and if it is a black man's blessing, it comes from an honest heart."

"Thank you, Cato," answered Jessie, presenting her hand, but her heart was too full to add another word, and she followed him silently, screening her face from observation by pulling her veil closely over it.

"Hain't you no messages for Mr. and Missis Butler?" asked the kindly negro, lingering beside the window where Jessie had seated herself.

"No," was the only reply; and, the next instant, steam was whirling the independent girl—where?

"Your master did not tell me that the

young lady was going to leave," remarked the Clerk of Finances to the Hotel, as Cato passed his office.

"He didn't tell me neither," returned Caro, "gentlemen and ladies don't go a gossiping round to servants, telling what they are going to do."

"No insolence, blackamoor," responded the clerk, nettled by Cato's manner, and the smile of the bystanders.

"I didn't mean any insolence, sir," replied Cato; one of whose traits was to back out of any position in the smallest possible compass where he was likely to be found in fault; "I thought you asked for information."

"Well, can you give me the information whether your master pays the young lady's bill?"

"My master is a gentleman, sir," returned the black with a pompous air, as if his master's mantle of gentility also enfolded his servant, "and never disputed any charge for his niece."

"It is well," muttered the clerk, "or I might have sent an officer after her."

Jessie's proud spirit sustained her from exhibiting any grief while she remained where her uncle might be informed of it; but the instant Cato's face passed from her sight, she burst into bitter tears, wrung from her heart by the cruel desolation of her situation. Woman will weep: the proudest heart among the sex will give way to unavailing tears.

Jessie did not weep because her resolution faltered in the course she had marked out; but the breaking up of all old associations, and the whirlwind of passion, which had wrenched and uprooted former sympathies; the fearful and untried future, its uncertainties, all appalled her. She shrank from the uncheered desolation of her pathway; and only was prevented from giving way to her grief in agonizing sobs by the presence of strangers.

She was aroused from further indulgence of bitter reflections, by the arrival of the cars at Buffalo, and the necessity of answering and attending to her own wants.

Her hesitation in stepping from the cars, and evident reluctance to encounter alone the rabble of porters and coachmen attendant upon such places, was noticed by one of the passengers, who immediately approached her.

"Can I be of any service to you, madam? if so, command me," said he.

"Thank you, sir," she replied, compelling herself to answer in a steady voice, "I wish to proceed immediately west; and if you will inform me where, or how, to secure a passage upon the steamboat, I shall be very grateful for the information."

"I am not certain," replied the gentleman, "being a stranger here myself; but I

believe there does not any boat leave in the afternoon. At ten in the morning, I think, is the hour of departure."

"You are mistaken," interrupted a porter who had heard Jessie's inquiry, "the boat leave in the afternoon: and all the lady has to do, is to go to a hotel and wait. She can get her dinner and get rested, and when the time comes, all the hotels send carriages down with the passengers."

"Thank you for your information," returned the gentleman; "if you will permit me, madam, I will attend you to the hotel across the street, unless you have a choice of some other house."

"The Western is a good house, sir," interrupted the porter, "and if the lady has any baggage, I'll take it right over for her."

"I have two trunks—" commenced Jessie.

"Show them to me, miss, or tell me the name on them, and I'll see them safe," interrupted the porter, who was as prompt in his movements as in his words.

"There is no name."

"Then you will have to show them to me," pursued the porter, leading the way.

Jessie and the stranger followed, and having pointed out her baggage, accompanied the stranger to the hotel.

"Miss Graham!" exclaimed a familiar voice, as she stepped into the portico, the speaker at the same moment approaching and extending his hand.

"Mr. Howard!" returned Jessie, grasping the extended hand, tears filling her eyes, and choking further utterance.

"What, my butterfly in tears," said the old gentleman as he conducted her up the staircase.

"But who was that with you?" he continued, noticing that the gentleman did not follow them.

"I do not know," returned Jessie, "a gentleman who proffered his services in seeing me from the cars."

"You here alone? where are Mr. and Mrs. Butler, and your uncle?" questioned the old man, looking into her face with one of his scrutinizing glances.

"Do not ask me here," answered Jessie, as they crossed the saloon to which he had conducted her, "when we are alone I will tell you all."

"If there is anything to tell, I must hear it instantly." And, summoning a waiter, he ordered a private parlor, to which he conducted Jessie. "Now, all," said he, as they seated themselves, "and perhaps, I, too, may have a communication to make."

She related all, and finished by declaring her resolution to be independent, and earn her livelihood by her own exertions.

"That villain, Ware, is at the bottom of this!" exclaimed the old man. "I shall

have to shoot him yet. But you would make a pretty schoolma'am! and out of charity to the rising generation, I shall not permit it."

"You forget that I have ceased to ask permission," returned Jessie.

"No such thing; you are only playing blindman's-buff, and have run away from one uncle, to run right into the arms of another." And he threw his arms around the astonished girl.

"What mean you?" she questioned, starting from her seat, "I have no uncle but my mother's brother."

"Your father had a brother—"

"He is dead, and your name is not Graham."

"Have you yet to learn that your grandmother was married twice, and that your father's brother was by the first marriage?"

"I remember to have heard both my father and mother speak of his brother, but they spoke of him as dead; and if I ever heard of my grandmother's having two husbands, I have forgotten it."

"Then, it is for me to give you the information. She had two husbands, the name of the first was Howard, and I was the son by that marriage."

"But uncle, when we questioned him at Saratoga, said he never knew any one by the name of Howard."

"After my mother's second marriage, which soon followed the death of my father, I was always called Graham, until when, in a moment of passion, I forswore my kindred and country, and resumed my father's name."

"You bewilder me—I cannot make this real; are you really my father's elder brother, whom all thought dead?"

"I am, miss incredulous; what further proof shall I give you?"

"Show me the resemblance of this," said she, baring her arm, and exhibiting the semblance of a bunch of strawberries, immediately above the wrist; "I have often heard my mother say that that I must have inherited from my uncle James, as he had one similar."

"That is proof to me, that your mother remembered me, years after our separation," said the old man, with more emotion than he was wont to exhibit; "and it makes you as a daughter to my heart, rather than the niece of my blood. Are you satisfied?" he continued, in turn showing the resemblance of a bunch of strawberries, just above his wrist.

Jessie made no reply; her heart was too full to speak. She could only look the deep emotion which thrilled through her frame. For a few moments, both were silent; Mr. Howard, from emotions connected with the past, and Jessie, from the mingled feelings of surprise and happiness.

Mr. Howard was the first to recover himself.

"Now," said he, "will you run away west, and turn schoolma'am?"

"I suspect, I can find a more pleasing service nearer," she returned, with her usual archness; "instead of teaching young ideas A B Cs, I am going to teach you how to be happy."

"Then you will change the guardianship of one uncle for another?"

"No, no; not guardian, I have a horror of the office; but, if you please, I will be your schoolma'am; and to commence, I must catechize on previous knowledge. Why did you run away from Saratoga, so as not to meet uncle Burton?"

"I'll make you a lawyer, instead of a schoolma'am. But I forget; all the sex are natural lawyers in cross-questionings."

"A philosophical remark, instead of an answer; I did not call upon you to recite your lesson in philosophy now, we will defer that for Saturdays and holidays. I'll repeat my question in another form. Did you leave Saratoga to avoid uncle Burton?"

"Yes, saucebox!"

"Why?"

"It is a long story, and we will defer it until after dinner."

"Dinner!" announced a waiter, tapping on the door.

"I am not dressed," said Jessie, looking down to her traveling habit.

"Sufficiently for a western schoolma'am," returned Mr. Howard, laughing, offering his arm.

As Mr. Howard's story was long, we can only give the reader a brief detail. He was, as he had proved to his inquisitive questioner, the half-brother of Mr. Graham, the son of a former marriage. Although he said the second marriage of his mother soon followed the death of her first husband, yet he was nearly three years old when it took place. The birth of Jessie's father did not occur until nearly four years after his parent's marriage, and the father-in-law, naturally fond of children, was pleased to have his little stepson called by his own name, and formally adopted him. The birth of his own son made no alteration in the intentions of the father; and the young men grew up, scarcely knowing (at least, the younger one) they were not the offspring of the same father.

The elder one (whom the reader knows as Mr. Howard) was of an ardent, active temperament; abrupt both in his speech and manner, and sarcastic in his remarks. He was not calculated to win summer friends, but those who could forgive the roughness of the bark, for the excellence of the kernel, valued him, and were his

friends forever. He early engaged in foreign commerce, and most of his time was spent in foreign lands. At one of his visits home, when his brother was about twenty, and himself twenty-seven years of age, he became acquainted with Mr. Burton and his sister. The sister's gentleness and beauty soon made a deep impression upon his ardent nature, while the brother's credulity and obstinacy were food for his sarcasm. He soon won the ill-will of the brother, and, in the warmth of his affections, he believed, some of the sister's kindly feelings. In the end, he found his brother a rival for the lady's favor, and the lady's brother unyieldingly opposed to his suit. The lady hesitated, and wavered in her decision, in hopes that her brother would yield his opposition; and the elder lover interpreted her hesitancy into want of favor, and the younger lover fancied he read a more pleasing interpretation for his wishes.

Mr. Howard was never possessed of patience to wait for any one to love him; and in a spirit of bitterness, which would have frightened tenderness from the breast of so gentle a being as Sophia Burton, he took his leave of her, quarrelled with her brother, and left a fair and open field for his younger rival.

Towards his brother, he exhibited none of the bitterness which filled his breast, farther than saying, that they two could no longer be known by the same name, and he believed he had a right to another, which he should assume. The younger Mr. Graham scarcely understood what he meant, and certainly did not heed it, believing it but an ebullition of passion. But the elder brother did resume his own father's name, and when asked the cause of the change by those whom he had formerly known and chanced to meet in his distant wanderings, he would reply, evasively, "Would not twenty thousand pounds tempt you to change your name, if you gained one equally as good?"

Some years after, by the demands of his business, he again visited his native country. He found in the interval his parents had died, his brother married, and living in one of the West India islands, and himself, from his long silence, supposed dead. He did not correct the false impression of his death, or renew communication with his brother, and again departed for the scenes of his labors. In the interval he had visited the United States twice, but his present return (a few months previous to his meeting Jessie at Saratoga) was his first visit since the death of his brother and wife. Believing Mr. Burton so fond of his sister that there could be no doubt of her daughter's becoming his heiress, he did not seek Jessie, although assured of her welfare until chance and

travel threw them together. She interested him; and being previously aware of Mr. Burton's desire for her to wed his foster-son, he chose to stand aloof, and not interfere in another's family arrangements, unless circumstances warranted his interference. But he was proud of his niece and if, as he said to her, she would mingle with fools, he wished her to appear as queen of them. Hence, from the mingled feelings of pride and tenderness, he had forwarded to her, as her guardian, the costly presents which had helped a villain to frame a plausible falsehood, injurious to her character.

"And then," said Jessie, as he closed his narrative, "I have discovered the prime mover and instigator of all my unhappiness within the last twenty-four hours?"

"And one, also, who will strive to create as much happiness from the same cause as a dunce and villain have made misery. But I must no longer delay my interview with Mr. Burton. Will you accompany me to the Falls, or will you remain here?"

"I should prefer to remain here. I do not want to run away and run back again the same day."

"Well, do as you please; if you were a minor I should place you in safe keeping until my return; but as you are of age, Mr. Burton cannot compel your return to his protection."

"But promise me one thing?"

"What now? Not to quarrel with Mrs. Butler, and spare Mr. Burton?"

"No, no; I leave them to your tender mercies, assured that you will do them no personal harm, and they deserve a taste of repentance for their conduct. But I must entreat that you seek no personal combat with Mr. Ware. I look upon a pistol as the argument of a coward."

"Modest miss! If you begin your tuition by hinting I am a coward, where will it end?"

"But—"

"Pshaw! girl, with your butts. I have told you before to mean what you said, and say what you meant. You would make a pretty schoolma'am!"

"But I am not to be evaded in my request by your assuming the office and tone of a schoolmaster," returned Jessie, with a smile.

"What do you fear?"

"Fear! Fear is not the term to apply to the motive which incited my request. I detest the use of powder and balls for the redress of wrongs and the punishment of injustice."

"And you would send me off like a schoolboy, with a promise to be very good and not disobey orders?"

"I will leave it to your own sense of right," replied Jessie frankly, extending her hand.

"That's right, Jessie," returned Mr. Howard, clasping the extended hand with a fervent pressure. "Never presume to dictate to me, and we shall pull very amicably in the traces together. And now, to encourage you to correct your womanly prerogative of teasing, and seeking to have the last word, I will tell you that no one is more opposed to duelling than myself. Aware of my unerring skill as a marksman, it could be nothing less than willful murder for me to fire at a man. But adieu: amuse yourself as you best can. I shall return sometime to-morrow;" and entering his carriage (which he had previously ordered), he departed.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEN Mr. Burton returned from his visit to Mr. Ware, he was in a tower of passion with Cato; although the dinner, which he had remained to partake with the reported broken-necked gentleman and his distressed wife, had somewhat mollified his wrath. If he had returned immediately, Cato's head would have stood in nearly as much danger as his ears did in the present crisis.

"You black rascal!" exclaimed Mr. Burton, as the attentive negro made his appearance, "how dare you send me off on a tomfool's errand! Had you no care for your neck? Dare again—"

"I don't know what you means, master," interrupted Cato, who always assumed the responsibility of putting in his explanation and veto where it best pleased himself. "I hopes Mr. Ware was not hurt so bad as the boy said; but I was so scared I didn't stop to question him."

"You blackamoor! would you try to make me believe any one told you such an outrageous lie?"

"Did I ever tell you a lie, master?"

"Why, no," answered Mr. Burton, cooling down; "but you understand things most blunderingly sometimes. Who told you the story? and what did he say?"

"I told you what he said, master—every single word; and I didn't stop to ask him who he was.—I was pretty careful not to do that," added Cato, mentally.

"I can see no cause to tempt one to invent such a miserable hoax," said Mr. Burton, speaking to himself rather than his servant.

"Anybody couldn't be wicked enough to do such a thing thinking to make the black man get a flogging, could they, master?" asked Cato, with great simplicity.

"Perhaps so," returned his master, relieved by the suggestion that the hoax was played upon the negro instead of him.

"And wan't Mr. Ware hurt aw?" pursued

Cato, to make his master's impression doubly sure.

"No: but how is Jessie? does she rebel at her confinement?"

"She told me to give you this," answered Cato, presenting the package intrusted to his care, "when you inquired for her."

Mr. Burton leisurely opened the envelope, anticipating a petition and remonstrance, but as the enclosure met his eye, "What!" said he, and perused the note in a rapid manner. "You, fellow!" he exclaimed, as he finished, shaking the paper at Cato, "are at the bottom of this!"

"As I live, master, I ain't.—I am the other side of the room," he added, mentally.

"Who, then, unlocked her door? Didn't I tell you to keep the key?"

"Yes, master; and I hung it up on that hook, and I know nobody has taken it down since."

"Didn't you carry her breakfast?"

"Yes, master."

"How did you get into the room?" pursued Mr. Burton, well knowing that if Cato was likely to be found in fault, there was no way to extract anything from him but by cross-questioning.

"I walked in."

"But who unlocked the door?"

"Miss Jessie, I suppose; I didn't see nobody else in the room."

"You rascal! do you mean to tell me that Jessie unlocked her own door, when you brought away the key and hung it up there, and have not taken it down since?"

"Yes, sir."

"You black knave! did you lock the door last night?"

"I lock Miss Jessie's door! I shouldn't have dared do such a thing."

"Didn't I tell you to?"

"Why, no, sir; you told me to bring the key, and—"

"What do you mean? dare you disobey my orders? I will have you flogged."

"I didn't disobey your orders; you told me to bring you the key, and I did."

"What did you suppose I wanted of the key, if the door was not locked?"

"I didn't suppose anything. When I sees, master, you are obnifusticated, and kinder in a passion, you knows I does jest what you tell me, and nothing more."

"I'll obnifusticate you!"

"You will, master, if you doubts my word any more."

"I do doubt any one's telling you that an accident had happened to Mr. Ware; and if I find out it was your trick, you'll get a fustification to your heart's content."

"As I live, master, a boy I met out here running, told me so."

"But how did Jessie go!—and what did she say?"



"She went in the cars; and said, 'I thank you, Cato.'"

"Fool! I mean, when did she tell you she was going, and what did she say about it?"

"She didn't tell me she was going."

"Stupidity! how do you know she is gone?"

"I see her go."

"Who carried her trunks down?"

"I did."

"How dare you, rascal, without telling me?"

"You told me to do everything Miss Jessie ordered; and you warn't here for me to tell you to come and say good-bye."

"Stupid blockhead! you'll get a thrashing for your implicit obedience to orders. When I told you to bring me the key, last night, you knew what I meant—that I did not wish Jessie to leave her room."

"When I see a gentleman is in an unreasonable obfuscation, I don't presume to know what he means, for I don't think he knows himself. I jest obey orders, and leave him to right it himself."

"I'll right you. Go and tell Mr. Butler I want to speak with him immediately. Do you understand, stupidity?"

"Yes, master." And Cato departed, perhaps better satisfied than his master with the conference.

It is but justice to Mr. Butler to state, that he was not aware of the serious nature of the rupture between Mr. Burton and Jessie. When he returned the evening before, he was informed by his amiable and prudent lady, that something unpleasant had passed, and that both had gone to their rooms in high dudgeon; "But," she continued, "it is not proper for us to interfere in their disagreement, and I presume it will be forgotten in a few days. At least, it will only increase it by forcing it upon their minds by inquiries."

"But what was the matter, dear? any new feature in the chronic complaint of Tom?"

"No; he has heard of something in her conduct which displeased him; and you are aware she is sometimes indiscreet."

Mr. Butler could not contend that cool, selfish prudence was Jessie's most prominent characteristic, and did not prolong the conversation. In the morning the subject had passed from his mind; and summoned away to attend to Mr. Ware, nothing had occurred to force it upon his attention; and his surprise, pain, and almost anger as he gained the leading particulars from Mr. Burton must be imagined.

"You may depend upon it," said Mr. Burton in conclusion, "she has gone off to seek the protection of her paramour."

"Never!" returned Mr. Butler with an energy which surprised his hearer, "I care not where you have gained your information; it is wholly false."

"But Mrs. Butler, when appealed to, although her sense of delicacy prevented her from appearing to comprehend the worst features of the charge, admitted that she condemned the miserable girl's conduct."

"Mrs. Butler is sometimes over nice; and Jessie, I think, has delighted to tease and annoy her in that respect; but my wife could not have hesitated to have given full and free testimony of the purity of Jessie's conduct, although, in her estimation, she might have been accused of some trifling faults of manner."

"Mrs. Butler did hesitate, and that was the very word she used. She said she must hesitate before she could speak an approval of Jessie's acts."

"Then, depend upon it, Mrs. Butler thought that her speech would make Jessie more thoughtful, rather than intending to condemn her for the past. The probability is, that the unhappy and wronged girl, outraged by your accusation, keenly sensitive that Mrs. Butler failed to defend her with a warmth equal to her own ardent feelings, and surprised, and perhaps indignant, that I did not instantly interfere, not knowing that I remained ignorant of the details of the painful scene last night, has assumed her independence; and in the pride of her outraged feelings, has followed her humble friend, Mrs. Walker, west, thinking to support herself by school teaching. That would be the most likely project to present itself at this moment—and—"

"A gentleman below desires to speak with you, gentlemen," said a waiter appearing at the door.

"If his time admits, beg him to excuse us, as we are particularly engaged," replied Mr. Butler, fearing that Mr. Burton might admit him, if he allowed him to answer.

"He said, sir, that his business was urgent and did not admit of delay," returned the waiter.

"Show him up," said Mr. Burton. "We can discuss this after his departure," he continued, addressing Mr. Butler.

"As you please."

The opening of the door interrupted his remark, and turning to see who their visitor might be, "Mr. Howard!" he exclaimed, advancing to meet him, "this is an unexpected pleasure."

"We will reserve compliments, if you please, sir, for the close of our interview," returned Mr. Howard, with more than his usual abruptness. "The gentleman with you I presume to be Mr. Burton," he continued, advancing directly before the latter named gentleman, and fixing upon his face a searching, penetrating gaze.

"Do I see the living or dead?" said Mr. Burton, starting up and retreating, at the same time returning the gaze bent upon him with one equally fixed.

"Then I am not forgotten," said Mr. Howard, "and we—"

"I never saw living man that had that look, but James Graham—but—" interrupted Mr. Burton.

"He whom you knew by that name stands before you," in his turn interrupted Mr. Howard, "and he comes to demand satisfaction for your insulting and unmanly conduct last evening towards his niece, Jessie Graham. Is it thus you would treat your own sister's child?"

"Yes; when she had disgraced the mother who bore her," returned Mr. Burton, "and—"

"Gentlemen," interposed Mr. Butler, "I entreat you to be calm: if Mr. Howard is Miss Graham's uncle (although I remain to be informed that her father had a brother), I am certain her only two relatives will not meet with unhappy and useless recrimination; but make a common cause, until they have traced and discovered the base maligner of her fair fame."

"Do you suppose, Mr. Butler," returned Mr. Howard, "that I came here, until I had a clue to unravel the whole affair? That consummate villain, Ware, was a suitor for Jessie's favor. She, unconscious of his aim, received his attentions as a matter of common gallantry, but I watched him and read his intentions. The morning that his horse ran away with her, being aware that Beauty was a trained race-horse, from anxiety I followed the party. I saw Ware manage to detach himself and Jessie from the rest of the company, and understood his meaning. He paused upon the brow of a hill, and I remained concealed from their view in a clump of trees at the foot. I could not hear what passed, but their pantomime was intelligible. He declared his suit and was rejected; but he persisted, and seized one of Jessie's hands, covering it with kisses—she struggled to release it, but he still detained it; she struggled no more, but from her calmness of action, I understood that her words were cutting and bitter—he flung her hand from him, and in an instant, she drew her glove from it, and dashed it with indignation upon the ground. At the same moment the rest of the party rejoined them, and I turned my horse toward the hotel; I looked back several times, and at last saw Jessie, as I had anticipated, coming at a speed which distanced all pursuit. My movements were prompt, and I was happy enough to secure her from harm. But from that moment Ware was her bitter enemy. After their return, I saw him mutter 'beware!' in her ear, when he thought no one observed him. But he was afraid of me, and while I remained at Saratoga, she was safe from his evil intentions; for I made him understand that I should defend her. But the villain has been filling Mr. Burton's ear with some

male as black as his own heart, and he, with the credulity of an old woman, has credited it."

"Sir! I may be as credulous as an old woman, but ladies now-a-days do not have magnificent presents sent to them from unknown persons for nothing. Can you give me as plausible an account of her horses, carriage, and money?"

"I can, sir; I sent them. I did not want to make myself known until your Tom business was settled. Carlton is a fine fellow;—I had no objection to the match, if the parties were pleased, and understood Jessie would feel more free to follow her whims about the matter, if she thought she had another uncle ready to offer her protection and support. But I wanted her to equal in dash the other dunces at the raree-show, and sent them as her guardian, knowing that until she saw you, there was no great danger of her supposing they came from any other source than her acknowledged guardian."

Mr. Howard's praise of Carlton, and his avowal of his desire not to influence Jessie in her decision upon the one subject nearest Mr. Burton's heart, mollified the latter gentleman's wrath, and he said, "I fear I have been hasty—but who could doubt a tale supported by such evidence?"

"You have been unjustly hasty," returned Mr. Howard, "and as an atonement in some measure, I wish you frankly to repeat the story you listened to, and assist me to punish that scoundrel Ware."

"But Mr. Burton has not informed us that Mr. Ware is the person who imposed upon his open-hearted generosity, which cannot suspect others of being less upright than himself," said Mr. Butler.

"Pshaw!" muttered Mr. Howard, perceiving Mr. Butler's endeavor to keep Mr. Burton in pliable humor, by administering sugar-plums, "it was no other."

"Do you confirm Mr. Howard's suspicion?" asked Mr. Butler.

"Yes; Mr. Ware was my informant; but I never heard before that he had been a suitor to Jessie."

"Did you suppose she would come and inform you that she had rejected him? and you may be certain, he never will gratuitously repeat the fact," replied Mr. Howard.

"But, gentlemen, I am so much in the dark, I must ask to have all these things explained," said Mr. Butler: "but in the first place, from your appearance and announcement, I understand that Jessie is under your protection?"

"Yes, I left her at five o'clock."

"How did she know where to flee to you for protection?" asked Mr. Burton, an indefinite suspicion of her having more affection for a stranger than himself crossing his mind.

"She did not know," answered Mr. Howard. "I met her entering a hotel in Buffalo, with every wrinkle of laughter and mischief smoothed out of her face; and upon inquiry found she was full tilt west, for a schoolma'am. Of course, I put a stop to that, and avowed my relationship. She doubted me, and cross-questioned me like a lawyer; but I proved to the saucy jade my identity, and I left her looking as happy as could be expected after such a turn-over in all her former anticipations."

Mr. Butler and Mr. Burton exchanged glances, when Mr. Howard announced Jessie's intention of going west. But as most of their mutual explanations are already in the reader's possession, we will omit them, merely saying that in the end all was explained to the entire satisfaction of both Mr. Burton and Mr. Howard; although the hasty temper of one, and the biting sarcasm of the other, more than once interrupted their deliberations. But Mr. Butler remained present, and by soothing the passions of Mr. Burton, and appealing to Mr. Howard's sense and justice, averted the storm, and continued the negotiations, until a treaty of peace was concluded.

It was resolved to make Mr. Ware a common enemy, and Mr. Butler petitioned as a personal favor to be permitted to give the gentleman the information that his rascality was unveiled. He did so from his fear to trust either of the old gentlemen with the mission. He knew that Mr. Burton would meet Mr. Ware with passion, and feared perhaps he might seek to apply personal chastisement as redress for his wrongs; and from Mr. Howard he anticipated a challenge. He had no desire to screen Mr. Ware from the consequences of his wicked maliciousness, but he thought the gentleman would be better held in check by the fear of an exposure of his baseness, than by any method either Mr. Howard or Burton were likely to adopt. And with the promise not to spare the offender in reproaches, the matter was consigned to his care; although both gentlemen reserved the right to punish in their own way the maligner of Jessie's fair fame, if he should cross their path.

Mr. Butler, with the tact of an experienced diplomatist, conceded what he could not prevent; but he had judged wisely of Mr. Ware's character, after understanding its destitution of honor and principle. Fear of exposure might deter him from projecting farther schemes of villainy, for with him, as with cowards in general, give them no hopes of escape, and their very desperation inspires their revenge.

When Mr. Butler waited upon Mr. Ware, and charged him with duplicity and falsehood, he assumed the character of injured innocence, and even Mrs. Butler could not have pronounced a more edifying lecture

upon propriety. He characterized Jessie's frankness of manner and speech as boldness, referred with tenacious memory to every infringement and contempt of prescribed rules of etiquette, and closed by an allusion to the unfortunate presents.

"What inference," continued he, "would a man of the world, who is not bound, like your sacred profession, to believe all things and hope all things, be likely to draw from these facts? I but stated my opinion to Mr. Burton, leaving him to form his own conclusions; and in so doing was not actuated by malice towards Miss Graham, but by a laudable desire to save an honorable man, whom I highly esteemed, from further disgrace by the questionable conduct of his young relative."

"Mr. Ware, in your remarks you entirely overlook my first statement (which I trusted was sufficiently explicit and emphatic), that all was discovered and explained, and that Miss Graham's relatives and friends empowered me to demand the most ample apology from you, for your conduct towards that lady. I did not wait upon you for explanations, or to listen to your justification; but to demand the expression of your regret, and the retraction of your words."

"Mr. Butler, you cannot ask a man to express regret for having done what he believed his duty demanded, or to retract what he firmly believes is truth?"

"When I said all was discovered, sir, I also supposed you would understand that your entire want of truth, and the motives which govern honorable men, were not among the least of the discoveries; but as your apprehension seems so very obtuse, I will also add, that we fully understand the cause of your malice towards Miss Graham. And I not only demand the most ample retraction of your insinuations to Mr. Burton, but also an apology for your conduct towards Miss Graham personally; which was unworthy of any man, much less a gentleman—and one who could not plead ignorance of what was due a lady at all times."

"If Miss Graham charges me with a want of due deference to herself," returned Mr. Ware with a sneer, "I must suppose it originated from a pique most flattering to me—I chose another object for my attentions, and made another my wife."

"Not until Miss Graham had refused the honor of being your bride."

"Really, if Miss Graham accuses me of having aspired to the honor of her hand," interrupted Mr. Ware, with a bland smile, "I must, at the expense of my gallantry deny the soft impeachment."

"Mr. Ware, this is useless: Miss Graham's pride prevented her from defending herself from your infamous accusation, or informing her friends of your unmanly

threats at Saratoga. You were rejected; and for your ungentlemanly persisting in your suit, you awakened Miss Graham's scorn, and she answered you with indignation—you best know why, and of what, you bid her beware, on the morning after your return from the ride, when your horse endangered her life."

"It was her own folly, not the fault of my horse, which was the cause of her Gilpin race," returned Mr. Ware, passionately; and then remembering that the indulgence of anger might ruin, what only calm, unblushing, impudent falsehood could hope to accomplish, he restrained himself, asking in as unconcerned tone as he could command, "if Miss Graham has not accused me of the unexpected honor of being a candidate for her favor, will you inform me from what source you have derived the information?"

"Mr. Howard."

"Mr. Howard!" repeated Mr. Ware, with an involuntary exclamation; "but Mr. Howard must have derived his information from Miss Graham."

"He witnessed what he repeats," said Mr. Butler.

"Indeed," returned Mr. Ware, regaining his self-possession, "Mr. Howard's testimony would hardly be admissible. His evident partiality for Miss Graham was a matter of unfortunate comment, although his age must have precluded all hope of gaining the lady's favored, free regard."

"Sir!" returned Mr. Butler, his indignation fully aroused by the last covert sneer, "you presume upon my forbearance. Mr. Howard can have no doubt of Miss Graham's regard, both for his intrinsic worth, and as one of her nearest relatives (indeed, only relative, with the exception of Mr. Burton); and now Mr. Howard is known as the acknowledged uncle and guardian of the lady whom you have defamed. It was with much reluctance, and at my most earnest request, that he permitted me to take upon myself this unwelcome mission; but feeling that I could not approve of his probable mode of redress, I persuaded him to allow me first to use peaceable means to procure the retraction of the falsehoods which you repeated to Mr. Burton, and your regret for having uttered them. Satisfaction and atonement for the wrongs you have committed are not possible. The law may give damages, and the code of false honor take your blood, but neither money nor your death can obliterate the suffering already endured; and Mr. Howard has promised me, that if I brought him your ample (he said abject) apology, and the unqualified retraction of your falsehoods, that he would not seek you personally. But he bid me say to you, to beware of ever again traducing innocence; that his eye was upon you, and he

should not hesitate in banishing you from the society of which you were a pest, even if he had to send you out of the world to accomplish it. To repeat this message was one of the conditions to which I was obliged to submit, to gain the ambassadorship of this unhappy mission; but I hoped to prevent even worse consequences."

"Well, sir; if Mr. Howard is Miss Graham's uncle," returned Mr. Ware, while his changing cheek gave the lie to his bravado of manner, "he is too much of a man of the world, to presume to insinuate that he believes that lady received her magnificent presents from an unknown giver, as an innocent and pure token of admiration."

"I know not whether you intend to convey the meaning, that a man of the world must, necessarily, to support the character, attribute everything which he may not fully comprehend to an impure motive; if so, I cannot envy the class whom you so designate, their generosity or purity of thought—the most vicious are ever the most distrustful of others' virtue and integrity. But as Mr. Howard himself was the donor of those presents which you have made of such frightful importance, undoubtedly, if he holds himself answerable to you for his acts, he will, if you inquire, give you the most satisfactory explanation, why, out of the abundance of his wealth and affection, he furnished his niece with horses, carriage, and servants."

"If Mr. Howard *was* the donor of those presents to Miss Graham," returned Mr. Ware, with only emphasis insinuations, "you must admit there was something questionable, to an indifferent looker-on, in seeing a young lady without an acknowledged guardian."

"Pardon my interruption—Miss Graham was under my protection."

"But it was well understood, that yours was only temporary authority. Miss Graham appeared before the world, with a suspicious silence maintained about all her relatives—rumor, from whence none could say, made her an heiress; but even you, sir, were silent about her relatives and guardian, neither admitting nor denying her claim to wealth—you may remember some remarks which accidentally occurred between us in regard to Miss Graham?"

Mr. Butler bowed his affirmative, and a meaning smile for an instant curled his lip.

"But under these circumstances," continued Mr. Ware, "the lady receives princely supplies, and an outfit rivaling in splendor the first. But afterwards an uncle and guardian appears on the stage; innocently wondering where his niece and ward had obtained the contents of her purse, and her dashing equipage; and frankly confessing

her but a dependant upon his bounty, and his heiress only upon stipulated conditions. You must acknowledge, sir, there was something suspicious in this to a man who is disposed to judge the world as he finds it, instead of blindly believing it all he wishes. And now, there appears another guardian and uncle, the donor of all these gifts, as he says; but who met this lady and passed weeks in her society as a stranger. I must confess there is more than I can understand."

"I must refer you wholly to Mr. Howard, for the explanation of his conduct," replied Mr. Butler, having watched his companion's countenance sufficiently close to understand that there was more power in Mr. Howard's name, than any appeal to truth and justice; "he did not authorize me to enter into a detail of his conduct, but to demand an apology for yours."

"If my suspicions, founded certainly upon the questionable conduct of her relatives, have unjustly injured Miss Graham," returned Mr. Ware, beginning to quail before Mr. Butler's determined manner and tone, "no one would more deeply regret it than myself."

"I see," said Mr. Butler, "it is difficult for your lips to confess yourself a liar and defamer, and I will write what I wish you to say; first premising that it must be signed without farther comment, or I shall instantly return to Mr. Howard, acknowledging the failure of my mission, and leave him to demand satisfaction personally."

Mr. Ware's face changed to an ashy hue, as he saw he must yield, or meet Mr. Howard as an avenger.

He found he had mistaken in attributing Mr. Butler's gentleness of manner to want of firmness. Mr. Butler hastily traced a few lines with his pen, and placed the paper before Mr. Ware.

"I cannot sign that," said the guilty man, his face assuming a livid hue, as he glanced over the contents of the paper.

"Nothing less than that can satisfy justice or Mr. Howard," returned Mr. Butler. "You shrink from humbling yourself before men, and yet you had neither fear nor contrition in degrading yourself before the gaze of your Creator, and shaming your manhood, by uttering base and malicious falsehoods. There is not as much degradation in confessing, even abjectly, a sin, as in the commission; and it is cowardice alone which makes men draw back, and hesitate to face their own crimes and errors, or fear to repair the consequences of their untruth and injustice as far as may be."

"Do you mean to insinuate, sir, that I am a coward?" asked Mr. Ware, sensitive, as all cowards are, of the imputation.

"My remark was a general one," returned Mr. Butler, "but my longer stay I perceive is useless—yet it were better to

sign that acknowledgment for the satisfaction of Miss Graham's friends, than this unhappy affair be bruited to the whole world. In parting, I will express my fervent desire that you may become a better, and consequently happier man—and may God spare you to repent of your errors." And he laid his hand upon the door to depart.

"Stay," gasped forth the guilty wretch, whom he was leaving, "I cannot see Mr. Howard—I could not endure his coarse insolence," he added, as a miserable excuse for his craven poltroonery.

Mr. Butler returned, and without remark placed the paper upon the table. The cold perspiration of shame and baffled malice started upon the forehead of the abject man, as he traced his name at the bottom of the confession which Mr. Butler had penned.

"May this signature," said Mr. Butler, taking up the paper, "prove but your pledge to a sincere and truthful repentance of your errors before God."

The terms which he had dictated were certainly abject enough to satisfy even Mr. Howard. The paper, to which Mr. Ware had affixed his name, read thus:

"I HEREBY retract the vile insinuations which I made to Mr. J. S. Burton, respecting his niece, Miss Jessie Graham, on the morning of the 17th of August, 184—; and to my shame confess them untrue, devoid of foundation, and as having originated from a malicious desire to injure that lady's fair fame, and cause unkindness and disagreement between herself and Mr. Burton.

"I, also, would humbly solicit Miss Graham's forgiveness for my unmanly threats and conduct towards herself at Saratoga; acknowledging that I provoked her indignation by ungentelemanly persisting in pressing an offensive suit.

"And to all persons, I most sincerely and earnestly declare (anything which I may have said to the contrary notwithstanding) that I know no evil of Miss Graham, and never witnessed any act in her incompatible with the most pure and truthful character.

(Signed) "J. MONROE WARE."

"What success? shall I be obliged to shoot the villain to bring him to a sense of his baseness?" were Mr. Howard's inquiries, when Mr. Butler made his appearance.

The latter gentleman made answer by placing the paper, which had been forced from Mr. Ware's cowardice, in the old gentleman's hands.

"The mean, miserable poltroon!" was his muttered remark, as he perused it. "By what process did you gain this?" he continued, turning to Mr. Butler. "You

never gained it from the compunctions of his conscience, nor appeals to his justice."

"If the confession is satisfactory," returned Mr. Butler, evasively; "I would rather be excused from repeating the arguments used, or describing all that did occur during my interview with the unhappy man."

"Unhappy man!" repeated Mr. Howard, sarcastically; "contemptible villain is a more appropriate term."

"And in my estimation," rejoined Mr. Butler, "all contemptible villains must be as unhappy men, as they are unfortunate specimens of humanity."

"Well," returned Mr. Howard; "I cannot stay to argue definitions in ethics with you; I presume Jessie is spoiling her eyes in looking, and pulling her ears out of all shape to hear the sound of my carriage."

"And you must allow me to accompany you," said Mr. Burton; "I cannot remain easy until I have asked Jessie's forgiveness for listening to a liar; and I must strive by extra kindness to make her forget my first harsh words."

"I am also anxious to see Miss Graham," said Mrs. Butler, "to explain that she misunderstood my words, as much as I did the subject of contention, the last time we met. Miss Graham could not suppose I believed her guilty of such improprieties, as I have since learned Mr. Ware charged her with."

"I believe, madam," returned Mr. Howard, bluntly, "you also charged her with improprieties, and hesitated to bear free testimony of the purity of her conduct. Shall I send you to obtain a confession from your lady?" he asked, in a laughing tone, addressing Mr. Butler.

"The motive power which made me successful in the first instance, would fail here," answered Mr. Butler, in the same tone.

"When we get Jessie back, the saucy fugitive will prove a very tyrant, because she will know that to make amends for our injustice, we shall refuse her nothing," said Mr. Burton, turning to Mrs. Butler.

"When you *do* get her back, I will promise for her good behavior and placable disposition," said Mr. Howard. "Be reasonable," he added, as he saw the blood rush into Mr. Burton's face, not desiring to arouse any unpleasant feelings; "you have Tom, let me keep Jessie, until I am obliged to send her home to be corrected. A child for each of us childless and wifeless old men is more than we deserve; but for you to claim both, is downright selfishness. Do as I have recommended, make Carlton happy in his own way, and I will endeavor to do the same by Jessie. But women are so unreasonable, there is no satisfying them. Give them the moon,

and they will want the stars and a little piece of the sky too—it is so pretty! Do you agree to my proposal?" he asked of Mr. Burton, who was canvassing in his own mind the prominent point under consideration.

"Not fully," returned Mr. Burton, "Jessie—"

"Is nothing but a specimen of her kind; whimsical, unreasonable, as they all are. But, man, if you persist in retaining the guardianship of Jessie, how can you in justice make Carlton your sole heir, as you have promised? Believe me, he is too generous and noble to accept a stiver of your property, under the impression that Jessie is unprovided for; and their union is an exploded fancy. No, you must, to accomplish what we have been talking of, make Carlton understand that Jessie is provided for as far as wealth is concerned; that she has no claims upon nor wishes any of your estate; and how will you make him believe this, under my restrictions not to inform him of my relationship and agency in the matter, until I choose, if you still retain Jessie under your protection? Nay, don't do good by the halves; make Carlton independent now, with the positive understanding that he is your sole heir, and leave him to seek his own happiness, and give me Jessie; we will meet, at least, once in a year to compare notes on our modes of treatment, and method of securing the happiness of our children."

"Shall I turn traitor and inform the children of your excellent arrangements for their benefit when they have arrived at years of discretion?" asked Mr. Butler, with a smile.

"At our first annual meeting you shall have liberty to do so," returned Mr. Howard. "You consent?" he added, addressing Mr. Burton.

"Jessie shall decide between us," said the old man, his lips quivering with emotion, as he remembered that perhaps one act of injustice had destroyed her confidence and affection forever.

"So be it," returned Mr. Howard; "but I shall object to Mr. and Mrs. Butler's attendance as your advocates. As pure selfishness prompts my refusal of their company, I anticipate that the frank confession of my motives will secure my pardon for lack of courtesy."

Mr. Butler, at least, could understand Mr. Howard's motives for desiring to exclude even the most intimate friends from the family conference, and made the proposal that himself and Mrs. Butler should depart *en route* for Saratoga, to await the issue of the claims of the two uncles and guardians upon the affections and person of their niece.

It was so arranged; and when Mr. Bur-

ton and Mr. Howard departed for Buffalo, Mr. and Mrs. Butler left Niagara for Saratoga.

"Well, now," said Cato, in one of his mental soliloquies, "master has seen the 'fects of one of his real obnifustifications. I hopes he will wait to find out what the matter is before he flies into tantrums. But I is glad we are going to leave here, for I've trembled that somehow he'd find out about that ragged, lying white boy's telling me the story. The white rascal! he has told all round that a black man at the Catrack House gived him two shillings to tell him that a man had broken his neck or leg. But, as I told Miss Jessie, it has all come right. I never knew it fail."

The interview between Jessie and her uncle Burton was satisfactory to both parties. Why it should have proved of so very peaceable character might be inferred from the fact that Mr. Howard was closeted with Jessie an hour before Mr. Burton was admitted, upon the pretence of preparing her to receive his visit. And she was prepared—to forgive, be grateful for past kindnesses, and trust that their future intercourse might never be clouded by doubts and suspicions; and also, to prefer uncle Howard's protection for the present, at least, until Tom's destiny was decided; and she added a gentle hint to Mr. Burton, that there was a lady—not Jessie Graham—involved in the question of Carlton's future happiness.

The subsequent arrangements and decisions of all the various parties whose histories are interwoven with our narrative must be inferred from our conclusion. We cannot anticipate events, and only premise that Mr. Howard was the prime mover in the various events which followed, although he veiled his intentions under pleas of personal engagements, business, and selfishness.

## CHAPTER XXV.

IN a little more than two months after the occurrence of the events recorded in the last chapter, Mr. Belmont's family were rejoicing in the return of the younger Mr. Belmont from his American tour. His stay in the United States had been prolonged weeks beyond his original intention, and each one was desirous to ascertain the cause of his detention.

"I was afraid, Fred," said his father, "you had turned democrat, and were waiting to take out your naturalization papers."

"Perhaps, sir," returned Fred, "you will find me more of a democrat than when I left you; but you forget, none but native-born citizens are eligible to the president's office, and I am not certain that anything

less than that could tempt me to forget my loyalty to our noble and lovely queen."

"Nonsense!" rejoined Lieutenant Stanley, who was present. "Fred, instead of studying politics, has been standing on a certain steamboat wharf in the United States, to superintend the embarking of the lady passengers. I say, Fred, did you again meet with the nymph of the thunderstorm?"

"I do not know whom you designate by your poetical title," answered young Belmont, vainly endeavouring to appear as innocent as his words avowed him ignorant upon the subject.

Mr. and Mrs. Belmont exchanged glances as they noticed the warm color mount upon their son's cheek at Stanley's abrupt question. Whether their expression was one of satisfaction or anxiety it would have required a Lavater to determine. A quizzical smile lurked around Bel's mouth as she also noticed her brother's slight confusion.

"Poetical, truly," returned Stanley. "Why, I have anticipated the world thrown into fits, and a continent set on fire, by the appearance of a new work, entitled, 'The Lady of the Storm,' which was so far to rival 'The Lady of the Lake,' that there would be no rivalry about the matter. But did you ever see her again?"

"If you refer to a lady whose sublime enthusiasm during a fearful storm in Chesapeake Bay charmed me to forget the tempest, in contemplating the lofty and grand of the soul, I must answer, we never have met since."

"Faith! I think the poem is commenced. Let me see: sublime enthusiasm—fearful storm—the lofty and grand of the soul; all that it requires for finish is a few unmeaning words to string it together, and a few rhymes. Let me help you: 'sublime enthusiasm' will rhyme with 'nature's spasm'—'fearful storm,' with 'fancy warm'—and the 'lofty and grand of the soul,' with 'outshone in splendor the whole.' Sense is no matter. Why, a spouter-critic once told me that in poetry the meaning was of no importance; all that was necessary were melodious words, mellifluously strung together. I would have sifted the whole United States through a fine sieve, but what I would again have looked upon a woman who could inspire me thus."

"No one but my noble cousin Frank would have power to accomplish the task he proposes," returned young Belmont, annoyed by his cousin's light railery.

"Don't assume that Signor-Don-air, or I shall fear we shall have the poem an alexandrine in Greek—now confess, your stay in the United States has been to hunt out your sublime enthusiast?"

"If it had been so; instead of standing

upon a steamboat wharf to accomplish my wish, I should have placed myself on a bookseller's shelf; for I heard the lady compare me to an interesting volume, picked up on a public table."

"Did she! why did you not tell her the volume was as rare as interesting, and beg her to accept the only copy extant, for her private library?"

"Perhaps I might have done so, if we had met again," returned young Belmont, smiling, for Stanley's mirth was infectious. "But I am at a loss for the source from which you have derived your information?"

"The source is of little importance, as long as the facts were correctly reported. And now, to have it fairly understood between us, I am frank to confess, all reports which reach me of the lady please me. I like her vastly well; and if it is no presumption upon your previous fancy, I am going to love her, and make her the offer of the office of librarian in my library—it being well understood that I am the only readable volume it contains. Don't laugh, Bel; I am not going to forswear any of my oaths of love and devotion at your shrine. You are my angel, and I shall ever adore you as such, but Fred's nymph of the storm is a woman with, if not as many faults as myself, enough to keep mine in countenance. But why, Fred, did you not inquire for the fair lady, when you afterwards met her party at Saratoga?"

"You seem to be so well informed of all the incidents of my travel, to give you a reason, would be superfluous. But the mention of Saratoga, Bel, reminds me of a forgotten message, which Carlton bid me deliver you, from your former friend Jessie Graham. She arrived at Saratoga the day I left, but I did not see her. Through Carlton, she desired all kind remembrances and much love to you all."

"Was I included?" asked Stanley, shaking his finger at Bel, who was laughing most heartily at her brother's message.

"Probably you would have been, if the lady had been honored with your acquaintance. But what are you laughing at, Bel? have I not performed my commission properly?"

"In the most proper manner, and with extreme haste."

"Why, I have not been home two days, and have talked all the time at that. But when we were laughing last winter about Jessie's 'bugbear Tom,' as she called him, did you suspect Carlton was the bear?"

"Not then."

"He and I have laughed many times, since I made the discovery of his identity, at Stanley's ludicrous description of the animal at the time."

"He must have felt flattered in listening to all our comments and compliments," returned Bel, without looking up.

"Not flattered," rejoined her brother; "he was seriously annoyed; but why, I never could discover. He is not usually sensitive to unmeaning railery."

"Hang Carlton!" exclaimed Stanley, "I wish he had changed into a real bear, instead of coming here last winter."

"I thought he was a favorite of yours," said the elder Mr. Belmont.

"So he is; but he and Fred hunt in couples, and leave not so much as a frightened hare, for a poor lieutenant in the army to catch."

"Jealousy certainly destroys every finer and nobler feeling, if it can cause Frank Stanley to become uncharitable and envious," said young Belmont, pointedly.

"Hang you! don't give us a Hebrew lecture on the passions. Come, are you going to keep Mrs. Lacey's dinner waiting all day?"

"I await my mother's commands."

"We will be ready to accompany you, as soon as the carriage is at the door," returned Mrs. Belmont, rising, and leaving the room, accompanied by Isabella.

"Do tell me, Frank, what I am to expect at Mrs. Lacey's to-day?" said Belmont, after his mother left the room; "you and Bel can hardly retain your important secret, and even my mother looks as if she could laugh at me. Has dear, old Mrs. Lacey married? for I can think of nothing else, that would entirely destroy what little patience I have left, after being cooped in a vessel eighteen days with the wind blowing from every point of the compass at once."

"I thought you had a fancy for storms."

"We did not have any storms," returned Belmont petulantly; "it was only boisterous."

"Your fancy, I suspect, was for the spirit of the tempest, instead of the wild grandeur of a storm at sea."

"Don't be a fool, Frank."

"That my father effectually guarded against by placing me in the army. He said that a sword and epaulet were a brevet of respectability, always entitling the wearer to rank above his merit, and—"

But the remainder of Lieutenant Stanley's sentence was forever lost to the world by the announcement of the carriage.

Mrs. Lacey greeted young Belmont, of whose arrival she had not been apprised, with a warm welcome; and as she turned to present another guest present, her intention was interrupted by an inquiry by Stanley for his "will-o'-the-wisp."

"In the conservatory," was her reply to his whimsical inquiry.

The conservatory was connected with the apartment in which Mrs. Lacey had received her guests, by half glass folding-doors, and both Isabella and Stanley started for its perfumed boundaries.



"Stay," said Stanley, intercepting Isabella's movement, "I claim the privilege of exhibiting Mrs. Lacey's nonpareil."

"It is to prevent your exhibition, that I would anticipate your announcement," returned Isabella.

"Upon my honor, my angel coz, if you spoil my special sport now, I'll not plead with papa when a renegade returns."

"I do not understand you; and shall expose your remark as a line in Fred's poem."

"Do not understand! then why that blush! Ah! cousin Bel! appeal to my mercy and I will be merciful."

"Then let me pass into the conservatory."

"Not so; another step that way and I will be as inexorable as Chimborazo—supposing that has a will."

"I never pretend to comprehend your poetics or heroics, and will show the better part of wisdom by retiring from the contention," returned Bel, leaving Stanley to pursue his way uninterrupted.

He soon returned, conducting, as the reader has anticipated, Jessie, to whom, without permitting her to greet the other guests, he presented young Belmont; adding, as he concluded the ceremony, "a young gentleman, Miss Graham, whom you will find a very interesting study; and, as this volume is the only copy extant of the work, he hopes its rarity will entitle it to a place in your private library."

Young Belmont was surprised to meet the lady of the thunderstorm, and more so to discover her the very Jessie Graham, who was his baby admiration as well as vexation; and his greetings were, although courteous, cold and dignified, perhaps too reserved. His manner contradicted his words, that he was "most happy to meet Miss Graham." Jessie's return to his courtesies was not wanting in pride, but a slight tone of vexation was substituted for the reserve.

"I was not aware," said she, "of Mr. Belmont's arrival; although, as it was a daily anticipated event, I might have understood what interesting book Lieutenant Stanley promised for my inspection."

"But what say you to giving it a niche in the poet's corner of your library?" persisted the rattling Stanley.

"That it would be lost amid the cobwebs and dust."

"What! I thought you fond of poetry and poets!"

"And that shows your want of penetration. I am too prosaic to comprehend either; and consequently, leave them alone in their glory."

"I should have thought differently," said young Belmont, "when I saw Miss Graham, but a few months since, elevated above fear by her enthusiastic devotion to the sublime and beautiful."

"I suspect, sir, that you mistook the hysterical emotions of fear, for something even more flattering to my taste."

"Are you serious, Miss Graham?" he asked, in a tone implying doubt or dissatisfaction.

"Somewhat sober-minded, sir; but I must admit that I do not comprehend the point which you would elucidate by your inquiry."

"Don't attempt it, Miss Graham," said Stanley, "Fred is as incomprehensible as a poet. In truth (although I regret to lower him in your esteem), he is a poet, but he is necessitated to apply to me for rhymes. Shall I repeat you our last joint attempt?"

"If Mr. Belmont's talents equal yours, I must beg to be excused, until, at least, I can have the pleasure of greeting the other guests."

"And can this be the same being, whose enthusiastic admiration of the beautiful and terrible in the elements, and heightened faith in the protecting power of Omnipotence, elevated her above her sex?" thought young Belmont.

"And has Mr. Fred Belmont put on the stately because he thinks I have visited the haunts of my childhood, to seek him out? I believe, uncle—but how should he know that we had met since our first youth? But it is no use to inquire, he knows everything by instinct or observation. But Mr. Belmont shall understand that he is not the star of my attraction; and uncle Howard shall learn that I am not the partner of his plot, if he has one. I wish I were dead or married; for those seem to be the only earthly uses that ever a woman-child was brought into the world for!" were Jessie's mental comments.

And certainly, if she had exerted one half of the power to have made herself agreeable, that she did to render herself disagreeable, she would have been irresistible. Whether Stanley was delighted, or not, with Mr. Frederick Belmont's reception, were a question; although he enjoyed the manifestation of Jessie's porcupine disposition exceedingly.

When Mr. Howard and Jessie left Buffalo, they accompanied Mr. Burton to New York, where they remained a few weeks, and Chole joined her mistress. Soon after Chole's arrival, Mr. Howard announced his intention of visiting England, where special business demanded his attention. He gave Jessie her choice to accompany him, or remain in America until his return, which might be prolonged indefinitely. Jessie, delighted with the prospect of a foreign tour, eagerly signified her desire to accompany him, and her preparations were speedily made.

The day before they sailed from New York, Mr. Howard said he had received very important information, which would

oblige him to visit one of the West India islands before going to England; "and," said he, "you will be delighted to learn that it is the one where your childhood was passed. I shall remain there several weeks, and, in that time, you can renew your acquaintance with the friends whom I heard you sending so many warm messages to by Mr. Carlton."

"My desire was to visit Europe, not the West Indies, uncle," said Jessie, in reply, with altogether too much simplicity to be natural.

"Our voyage to Europe will only be delayed by this call; we shall sail from the West Indies for England, as soon as I have arranged the business which calls me there. But, girl, deception is not your forte; you are not candid: if you have any objection to visiting your former friends, say so; and explain frankly what it is."

"Nothing could give me greater pleasure, uncle, than to see my dear Bel, good old Mrs. Lacey, and Mr. and Mrs. Belmont, but I would rather not visit them at present."

"What is your objection! if I do not understand it frankly, I shall not make any different arrangement, and our passages are engaged; before I returned to tell you of the change of our present destination, I went to look for a vessel, and found one, which sails to-morrow afternoon. I cannot see what difference it can make, if you are not finally disappointed in your European tour, if it is delayed, provided the interim is pleasantly filled—but women never know their own minds, and you, with all your pride and frankness, are no exception to the sex."

"I know my own mind sufficiently to understand that I was pleased with the idea of the European tour, and more than grateful to you for proposing it; and I also know that I do not wish it delayed, to visit the West Indies."

"Your reason?"

"I hardly understand that—at least—could not shape it into words."

"Woman! woman! you know, and you don't know! do as you please; don't discommode yourself to accommodate my business, or gratify me with your company; I have always roamed the world alone, without human being to care whether I lived or died, was sick or well, and I can do so now—at least I shall not change my arrangements for a woman's whim; but I place no coercion upon your movements; I would not give a fig for your affection, if it is not free as air: I want no bought obedience 'to please you, uncle'—please yourself, if you can, and let me know, immediately, your decision; for if you remain, I must see the captain of the packet this evening."

"I'll go, uncle; but—"

"But! go or stay, but no buts about the matter; know your own mind, and no whining about it afterwards—do you go, or stay?"

"I go."

"You shall not have cause to regret it—you have pleased me, and it will result in pleasure to you."

"Perhaps so."

"Doubt! I believe a woman would doubt her own existence, if she did not assure herself of the fact, by swallowing a piece of bread and butter, every morning."

We cannot state, if we would, that Mr. Howard's cause for visiting the island was not connected with the great commercial interest of the world; but we have doubts, as doubtless the reader has, about the matter. If it had been Mr. Burton, instead of Mr. Howard, we should instantly have pronounced it one of his plans; but Mr. Howard's plans (if he had any) were superior to Mr. Burton's, in this respect—he kept them to himself.

But if Mr. Howard's conduct was influenced by his own private considerations in regard to Jessie, it is but additional evidence to a curious fact, which we have observed, and which half causes us to doubt the sympathies of consanguinity, namely: the most tender, affectionate, and loving fathers, brothers, and uncles, always manifest an anxious desire to relieve themselves of the duties of protection to their unmarried female relations, by transferring their natural authority to elected and delegated power.

Jessie, immediately after her arrival, which was several weeks before young Belmont's return, had recounted the adventure of the thunderstorm, making herself and Mr. Belmont conspicuous in the narrative, and as the only two persons present who were frightened out of their wits, and in the height of their fear forgot the danger.

She made herself and him as ridiculous as he would have made the same scene sublime and poetical. Her account was like robbing Milton's *Paradise Lost* of its glorious imagery and glowing language, and giving the idea in plain prose.

And when Belmont arrived, his friends resolved not to inform him of their discovery of (as Stanley called her) his nymph of the storm, permitting Stanley, at his urgent request, to manage the introduction.

Jessie had anticipated his arrival, and knew that probably they should meet; and had resolved that the cold distance of her manners should convince the gentleman that her evident pleasure in their former meeting was only *pro tem.* admiration. And if her effort was to destroy his preconceived exalted opinion of her superiority

over other womankind she accomplished her intention. Jessie Graham the enthusiast, and Jessie Graham the trifler and determined annoyer, were two very different beings.

Stanley, although highly esteeming his cousin's character, and warmly attached to him, delighted to annoy him in small matters, and with Jessie for aid-de-camp in mischievous mirth, their joint efforts were highly successful. Poor Fred! he could not as a man appeal to his mother for protection against their systematic vexations; and Isabella, if she did not assist them, certainly did not mar their sport; and there was no peace for poor Fred, but in the silence of his own room, where Stanley declared he spent his time in perfecting his poem.

Weeks passed without change, and Mr. Howard began to talk of prosecuting his voyage to Europe. He was evidently baffled, and in his own mind accused more bitterly than ever the whole of womankind of levity, inconstancy, and want of will.

If Jessie had avoided young Belmont's society, he could have read interest instead of dislike; but she evidently sought it—and sought it only to prove her powers as a tormentor.

Mr. Howard was ever ready to say, that woman

“\*\*\*\* was a willful, wayward thing,  
\*\*\*\* fantastic and perverse!”

but he had yet to learn that love was equally so,

“\*\*\* and makes its sport of persons and of seasons;  
Takes its own way, no matter right or wrong.”

Stanley, although her most faithful coadjutor, was at a loss for the incentive for her unprovoked hostility; and Isabella was half disposed to accuse her former friend of capriciousness. Mr. and Mrs. Belmont were at least not annoyed; for whatever their respect for her parents might have been, and their interest for the bereaved daughter, yet they had no particular desire that their only son should wed an unportioned orphan. And Mr. Howard's intentions towards his niece were unpublished, and there are ever always so many things to change the purpose of childless, unmarried, whimsical uncles. Mrs. Lacey saw nothing but the effervescence and hilarity of youth.

One evening Stanley and Bel were with Jessie at Mrs. Lacey's, and Mr. Howard was at his lodgings in town, ostensibly arranging for their departure.

“Upon my honor, ladies,” said Stanley, with a very undignified yawn, “if you will add lullaby to your silence, I will go to sleep; for months Bel has appeared as if nothing could compensate her for her thoughts—and you,” he added, turning to Jessie “seem at the present moment to be

infected with her disorder; shall I exorcise the evil spirit's influence?”

“Your exorcism brings them, instead of expelling,” returned Jessie, directing Stanley's attention to an intruder, who had entered unannounced.

“Upon my word, Fred, this is kind; your appearance has awakened Miss Graham, and brought a bright color to Bel's cheek—Good God!” he exclaimed, “what is the matter? Are you ill, Bel?” and he sprang to her side.

The deathly pallor which had succeeded the blush upon Isabella's cheek, seemed to warrant his alarm, and each sprang to the fainting girl, while her brother, snatching a glass of water from a side table, placed it to her lips.

“Be calm,” he whispered; “I did not think, or you should not have been tried.” A grateful look was his only answer.

“The heat of the room is oppressive,” he continued, as he rose from his stooping posture; “Miss Graham, will you accompany Bel into the cooler air of the conservatory, and she will soon be well?”

The ladies had hardly disappeared at the opposite door, before a servant announced Mr. Howard and Mr. Carlton, ushering in the gentlemen.

Mrs. Lacey met her unexpected guest with a warm welcome and gratified smile.

For an instant Stanley remained as if transfixed with surprise, and his bloodless lips and cheeks proclaimed deep emotion; but it was but for a moment, and the next he was as wild and reckless as ever.

“Mr. Carlton,” said he, extending his hand, “I suppose I must say that I am overjoyed with this unexpected pleasure, and considering yourself individually, I am most happy to meet you again. But since your departure, we have learned that you were the veritable ‘bugbear Tom,’ whose carnivorous disposition excited our horror last winter, and I have an instinct that you have made your appearance to devour my pet lamb.”

His speech was as applicable to Jessie as to Isabella, and perhaps more so, as she had given Carlton the title, and was Stanley's professed favorite. And Carlton chose so to construe it, for he replied, “that he trusted Miss Graham had no fears of receiving harm from him, and he certainly should solicit from her generosity testimony of his peaceable disposition.”

“Where is Jessie?” asked Mr. Howard. “Mr. Carlton is the bearer of letters and messages from her friends in Virginia.”

“She is in the conservatory with Isabella,” replied Mrs. Lacey; “but I cannot wait to learn through her, but must inquire for my former friend, Mr. Burton.”

“He is in good health,” returned Carlton, “and charged me to deliver his kindest

remembrances, with his continued recollection of your kindness to his sister during her last illness, and care for her orphan child."

"Poor Sophia! she deserved all care and love," said Mrs. Lacey, and she motioned the attendance of a servant, and bade him seek Miss Graham.

"Permit me to execute your bidding," said Stanley, anticipating the servant's movements.

"Miss Graham," he continued, as he entered the conservatory, "a gentleman in the parlor bears you intelligence from your Virginia friends."

"Who?" was her startled query; and without waiting for an answer she darted away. Isabella was resting her head upon the sill of a low window, and her position completely concealed her face from Stanley, as it had been from Jessie.

"Have you no curiosity to learn of the new arrival?" asked Stanley, in a tone of bitterness, "or would it be superfluous to name the gentleman? I have always heard that love was blind, but it must be a mesmeristic blindness that can see through walls."

"Am I indeed humbled so low that even Frank Stanley taunts me?" said Isabella, looking up, her face crimsoned with shame and wet with the tears which had been silently flowing.

"Forgive me! Isabella; I knew not what I said," exclaimed Stanley, kneeling beside her. "I meant not my unmanly speech as a taunt; the wretched, in the fulness of their own bitterness, forget to con their words." And as the ever laughing, gay Stanley bowed his head upon his cousin's hand, she felt it wet with his tears.

"Stanley!" exclaimed Isabella, forgetting her own emotion at the sight of his, "what moves you thus?"

"It matters not; I have never poisoned your ears with the wild wishes of my heart: but think you I could see, hear, and be with you daily, and never desire more than a cousinly regard?"

"And you have more, much more; you are to me even as Frederick, and he is scarce dearer than you."

"Let it be so," said he, rising; "despair unmanned me for the moment, but forget it—forget all—and still believe me but the buffoon of soulless mirth." And his tone of bitterness was even more painful than his tears.

"Isabella," said her brother, entering the conservatory, "are you recovered?"

Stanley bent his head out of the window, as if to gather a branch from the luxuriant trailing vine which shadowed it, and Isabella laid her hand with a kindly pressure upon his, which rested upon the window-sill, as she turned to answer Frederick's inquiry.

Stanley felt that he was understood, pitied, and forgiven; but could that still his maddened pulse!—and withdrawing his hand from that light pressure, he leaped through the window, and disappeared in the shrubbery of the garden.

"And will you forgive me the fright I gave you?" asked Frederick, who had noted nothing uncommon in Stanley's abrupt departure.

"I cannot forgive my own nervous weakness, which always makes me tremble or faint at anything unexpected," replied Isabella, blushing.

Her brother smiled, but made no farther comment upon the subject; but said if she was sufficiently recovered he would conduct her back to the parlor, where he was certain her company would give pleasure.

Frederick, when he was approaching the house with Mr. Howard and Carlton, had told the gentlemen that he would hasten forward and announce their coming; and entering the parlor while Stanley was speaking, Isabella was the only one who had noticed him. Meeting her eye, he motioned with his hand for her to look from the window. The first glance brought the color to her cheek, and the second one sent the warm blood back to her heart.

When Stanley rejoined the company, he was gay as ever. How often the merry laugh conceals the canker-worm of care, and covers the heart's deep despair!

Jessie's delight in hearing from her friends made her forget, for the time, her human-nettle character, and young Belmont listened like one waking from a dream to her animated inquiries, and playful remarks, witty without sarcasm. "Can I," thought he, "have mistaken her? is she an enthusiast or shrew?"

Begging Mr. Belmont's pardon for commenting upon his mental queries, we cannot forbear another, by asking if all shrews are not something of enthusiasts!—although we would not suggest the idea that all enthusiasts are of necessity shrews.

Carlton was the bearer of a letter from Emma, wherein the affectionate girl informed her friend that the day which marks the most important era of woman's life was named. "And where," she continued, "are you?—who for years have promised that nothing should prevent your attendance and assistance at the ceremony? I tell Henry that I cannot be married without you for a bridesmaid, no more than without him for bridegroom. He says he feels flattered by the assurance, and if I persist in the opinion, he shall sue you for damages. But how could you go and leave me at this time?—has the hero of a thunderstorm more attractions than old and tried friends? But you must take the bearer of this letter for good or evil, or will never be grafted branches upon

same tree, and Dinah's prophecies will fail. Have you forgotten her sibyl predictions? You must not, lest you forget that *seven* is a charmed number in your life. But come back; and, if possible, be here at least a week before you receive this! There, have I not proved my ancestral descent?—which you know was from the warm hearts of the Green Isle."

The next morning after Carlton's arrival, Frederick entered his father's room, saying that his friend solicited a private audience. "He has not informed me for what purpose he seeks this interview," he continued, "but should my suspicions of its import prove correct, may I hope that you will not permit prejudices against a nation to influence your decision to the individual? After months of constant intercourse, I must say that I know of no man to whom I would more willingly commit my sister's happiness, than to Mr. Carlton."

"I sincerely hope," returned Mr. Belmont, "that what you suggest is not the subject which Mr. Carlton desires to discuss. I respect him highly, but I should be unwilling for Isabella to marry any American."

"If my sister's happiness is involved in the question, I am certain you will consider that of more importance than the birthplace of the man who might ensure it."

"It cannot be possible."

"I do not say that it is so; but I am far from thinking it impossible. I have met but with few men in any country superior to Mr. Carlton in mind, manners, or principle. He is the very soul of honor, and a man calculated to win as well as keep the affections of a warm, pure-hearted woman. If Isabella loves him, she never will love another, for she will never meet his equal."

"Mr. Carlton is fortunate in his ambassador! You are not wont thus to seek to influence my conduct."

"I trust I have not failed in respect to you, by speaking warmly of my friend's merits. And aware of your preconceived opinions, I could not forbear to say what I have, and even more, if Isabella's happiness is at stake."

"Go; tell Mr. Carlton I will meet him in the library immediately."

"My sister!—"

"Go: she has not run wild with democracy—she will remember that she is her father's daughter."

"Have I failed in the respect of a son?"

"No, Fred," said Mr. Belmont, extending his hand, "never; but your words move me—pain me. I should not be willing that Isabella should marry any American: but go, and send Mr. Carlton to the library."

Frederick departed with a sad heart, for he never had seen his father more moved; and he foresaw that his consent would not be easily gained.

We cannot relate all that passed in the library. After a few unmeaning remarks wide from the subject, a preface usually used upon important occasions, Carlton frankly stated his prospects, position, and wishes, and formally solicited Mr. Belmont's consent to his addresses to his daughter.

Mr. Belmont debated the question with the tact of a diplomatist, and neither gave or refused his approbation to the suit; but expressed frankly his desire that his daughter should not marry any other than one of his own countrymen. "You may think," he continued, "there is but a slight difference between an Englishman and American. Perhaps there may not be in individuals, but your form of government is different, and, in my estimation, insecure; and it would seem like disloyalty in me, to give my daughter and my estate to any other than a worthy subject of our gracious queen."

Carlton thought this sounded more like a discourse upon political economy, than on love and marriage; but lovers are proverbially unreasonable when listening to common sense views. And perhaps there is no better test of the intensity of the passion, than the manner of discussing it; for love is but a species of monomania, and those who can talk reasonably and calmly upon the subject, are but little affected with the disorder.

"Is my daughter aware of the feelings which you profess for her?" asked Mr. Belmont, as Carlton remained silent.

"Not by words, sir: but when the heart is on fire, its language finds utterance without recourse to courtly phrases."

"I have no objection that the decision rest with her. If, knowing my unwillingness for the union—fully understanding that my consent would not be given, unless her whole happiness is involved by withholding it, she decide in your favor, I must submit."

Whether to consider this a gracious refusal, or a hard-wrung consent, Carlton could not understand, and replied with an American answer: "May I ask, sir," said he, "whether any of your objections are to me individually, to my prospects or position; or whether they are wholly national?"

"Not to you, sir; but to any man who was not my own countryman. And as I leave the matter entirely in my daughter's hands—with the understanding, that if you plead your suit, you also name my objections—it is not necessary to prolong this interview, further than to assure you, that you may always command my services, as

you have my most earnest wishes for your happiness, excepting in the question of your union with my daughter." And he bowed Carlton from the room.

Under these considerations, Carlton could not, would not plead his love with the proud man's daughter; and he left the house without even seeing Frederick, and hastened to town to arrange for his immediate departure for the United States. After reflecting more calmly, than in his power for the first few hours, he was aware that he must return and take leave of the family and Frederick. He had the warmest hospitality to be grateful for, if he was refused a dearer boon. He must also see Mr. Howard and Jessie, and bid farewell to Mrs. Lacey. And perhaps also, he might have thought to take the last look of the one most beloved. He certainly had sufficient and reasonable causes to draw him back to the house, from which he had but a few hours before fled, as if its very walls could tempt him to unmanliness.

It was nearly dark when he returned, and a servant preceded him to the drawing-room, merely announcing his name, and, throwing open the door, retired. No one but Isabella was present, and as she started from the couch where she had been reclining, and the bright blush of modest consciousness tinged her cheek, and her eyes sparkled the warm welcome which the lips refused to utter, the man must have been a stoic, who could have repelled the ardent exclamation which burst from Carlton's lips.

We never could, nor shall record the whole of a real lover's declaration of his passion. If we ever heard one; we were so frightened by the *act* of listening, that we never could remember one half that was said; and we frankly confess that we were no "eaves-dropper" in Mr. Belmont's parlor the evening in question. And as we write truth, we can only record the facts within our knowledge.

But the exclamation unsealed Carlton's lips; and forgetting his almost scorn of the father's national pride, forgetting his resolutions, forgetting everything but the image of beauty and love before him, he poured forth his feelings in a burst of eloquence, which would have made his fame or fortune before a jury. He pleaded no favor, he sought no return; but he poured forth his soul in the magic words of true feeling, which are inspiration.

"But," said he in conclusion, "your father declines to give your hand to any other than one who can claim his birthplace upon his native island; unless, what I could only hope from years of devotion and tenderness, regard for your happiness should compel his consent. He says if your whole happiness depended upon a union with another than one of his own

countrymen, he should not withhold his consent; although it would grieve him to pronounce it. I cannot seek to induce you to pain the kindest of parents; nor have I the vain hope that an acquaintance of a few months could claim such portion of your regard as to warrant my asking, as your father expressed himself, your decision between his wishes and my love, and I came to take my leave, not thinking to utter what I have: but to linger here were madness—and in two days I embark for home."

"Tell my father," said Isabella, without raising her eyes, and speaking in the soft tremulous tone of deep emotion, "that the heart recognizes no geographical boundaries."

"May I hope!" exclaimed Carlton, springing to her side, and—

But his movement was arrested by a low stifled sob from the opposite side of the apartment. In an instant he was beside the capacious easy chair, which had concealed the intruder, or listener.

"Mrs. Belmont!"

"My mother!" and the trembling girl kneeled at her mother's feet, hiding her blushing and tearful face upon her mother's lap.

A mother's presence in such a scene was perhaps as novel as unexpected; but no more loving or truthful confidant can exist than a mother's heart. Fathers may be proud and unyielding; brothers ambitious and selfish; but a mother always loves.

"My mother!" (and blessings be upon the kindest and best of parents, far distant) and to that simple appeal the fond mother's warm heart promised all that a mother's voice could effect. And her pleadings were not unsuccessful. Mr. Belmont's pride yielded to his wife's entreaty and Isabella's downcast, pleading looks.

How Carlton commuted with the captain with whom he had engaged his passage did not transpire; but he did not sail in the proposed vessel, or leave the island within "two days." Jessie said that "even men sometimes changed their intentions."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

A few days after Carlton's change of intentions, Mr. Howard announced his intended departure within the next week.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Isabella; "Jessie cannot go until—"

"Until when, my blushing lady?" asked Mr. Howard, as she stopped, confused.

"We cannot lose her again so soon, and she has a special engagement with me."

"Ah! she has. I am inclined to think she has broken a similar engagement before with another friend, and that it will

not pain her sense of truth to disappoint you. And beside, her visit here was almost compelled; and she will joy to be away again."

"Did you come reluctantly, and will you be happy to leave us?" asked Isabella, in a tone between doubt and pain.

"My uncle has said so, and it would not become me to dispute his word."

"Jessie!"

"Isabella! do not distrust my affection for you! Never since our childhood days has my heart cooled towards my first, my dearest friends; and never for an instant have I doubted your affection. To my uncle—not to his commands—I owe the pleasure of meeting you again. I would not have come now, perhaps not for years, if I could have avoided it; but uncle Howard's affection is all that is left me from kindred, and 'where he goes, there I go also.'"

"Why would you have avoided the present visit?" asked the puzzled Isabella, looking into the confused face of her friend for a solution to her query.

"It must be a young lady's reason," said Mr. Howard, "to judge by the color of her cheek. And let me tell you, Miss Belmont, never ask a woman anything she blushes at. She will either tell you a lie, or not half tell the truth."

And there was another auditor present, who pondered upon Jessie's unguarded confession, "I would not have come now, perhaps not for years, if I could have avoided it." And yet he knew, from her indignant tone, it was not for want of affection to her former friends. If Mr. Frederick Belmont had begun to study the puzzle of Jessie Graham, it would have taken him his life to read the riddle.

The time for Mr. Howard's intended departure drew near, and Stanley affirmed if Jessie left him without other companionship than the classic Fred and two happy lovers, he should hang himself from *ennui* and despair. Jessie quietly unbound the riband from her waist, and begged to witness the ceremony.

"You are unmerciful."

"A woman has no other resource to convince presuming young gentlemen that she can exist without them."

"But Fred never presumes upon your favor. See, there he stands, a classic statue of manly perfection; and I doubt whether his heart ever throbbed with pleasure or pain at woman's smile or admiration. I did have some hope, when he first returned that a certain nymph of the storm might cause a pang to his adamant heart. You should have heard and seen his manner when he said if I referred to the lady whose sublime enthusiasm, and—but I cannot for love or mischief remember it. What was it, Fred?"

"My memory is not as tenacious as yours, Frank; and I must be excused from remembering what I have utterly forgotten."

"The world are proverbially ungrateful, and you are no exception, Fred. What! forget! when I furnished rhymes for every line! All that I can remember was, that 'sublime enthusiasm,' was to rhyme with 'nature's spasm.' But it's lost; and there goes another mighty effort of genius, swept, unrecorded, into the abyss of time. But, in talking of Fred, I forget you. He is not a presuming young gentleman, and yet you are as unmerciful to him as to me."

"But he is a young gentleman; and the class is divided into two castes—triflers and grumblers. The first love, or profess to love, every woman they meet; but they are harmless from the known generality of their devotion. The second, and most hateful caste, under lofty notions of honor, and from an exalted sense of their own merits, fear that every woman will fall in love with them; and, to secure themselves from the calamity, stand aloof in proud dignity, with even their cravats tied in a don't-love-me knot. Young gentlemen are troublesome bipeds for our poor sex; and all one can do is to laugh with or at them."

"Your distinctions are flattering, Miss Graham," remarked Frederick; "perhaps to you there may be no difference between a coxcomb and a man of sense."

"Not much, in their just meed—the one is amusing, and the other provoking; and, in truth, I can see no very vast difference between the man who thinks himself irresistible, and the one who fears himself so—both partake of the spaniel nature."

"You certainly have been unfortunate in your acquaintance, Miss Graham, if you can make such sweeping assertions."

"If what I have noted is particular, rather than general, I have been most unfortunate; but I have always excused my friends, believing their failings incidental to the kind, rather than faults of particular characters."

"Make you no exceptions to the sex!"

"Oh, married men are humanized; and old bachelor uncles are all that can be anticipated from not perfected specimens of humanity."

"Miss Graham! Miss Graham!" exclaimed Stanley, "I am married, or an old bachelor uncle—which shall it please you?"

"An old bachelor uncle is your vocation—you never will marry."

"Why am I doomed to celibacy's cold fate?"

"Shall I tell you?"

"No; it would but publish your cruelty."

"I am most happy," remarked Carlton, who had been silently listening to the war of words, "that to gain your approbation, I have hopes of speedy humanization."

"You need it. A man who could avoid for years, and pain, by his absence, a worthy and kind old man, from fear that a young lady might be too deeply impressed with his merits, needs some radical change in his opinion of his own superior irresistibility. But I have vanquished you all, with long words, if not arguments, and I'll run before you recover. Come, Isabella; I want to show you those passages in the book of which I was speaking."

"May I come also?" petitioned Carlton, with mock humility.

"Certainly: when I slaughter, I always take especial care of the wounded." And the trio proceeded to the library.

Whether Frederick had left the room before they departed, or by their lingering in pleasant chat by the way, gave him time to follow and reach the library first, never was ascertained. The theory most flattering to his manliness, was, that he left the room first; for it was not to be supposed that he would stoop to the act of intentional listening. But Jessie was certain that he remained in the room with Stanley when they left it, and Stanley could not remember, although he sustained Jessie's assertion. But whether Frederick left the room before, or afterwards, it is certain, that when they entered the library, he was seated in the deep embrasure of one of the windows, concealed from view by the ample drapery of the curtain, and had a book, wrong side up, and open in his hands.

The book to which Jessie had referred, was one which Frederick had lately received from his correspondents in England. It was a new work. Carlton had not seen it, Isabella had not read it, and Jessie had accidentally taken it up in the library the evening before, and was so charmed with its pages, that she nearly perused it before sleeping, and had finished it in the morning. Frederick had noticed her fascinated abstraction, and certainly felt a curiosity to know her opinion of its merits; for the work had peculiarly pleased him. But he also understood that it would be useless for him to solicit an expression of her interest; and it is barely possible, he thought to possess himself of it clandestinely.

Jessie took up the book and pointed to the passages which she had named, and continued to comment upon its merits, if not with a critic's taste, in a tone which exhibited her appreciation of its rare beauties and glorious thoughts. Her remarks showed that her heart was sensitively alive to the true, the grand, and the beautiful.

Raising her head to enforce a thought, by a graceful gesture of true feeling, she encountered the eyes of Frederick (who, in his deep interest, had put back the curtain), beaming upon her with an expression which she had never seen since their communion during, and after the fearful and eventful storm.

Whether she remembered at that moment the tact of the orator, who, in absence of mind, had pleaded the case of his opponent, instead of his client, I cannot say. But with equal presence of mind, she acted upon the same hint, either from intuition or memory.

"Such," said she, "doubtless, will be Frederick's opinions, if he condescends to enlighten us with an expression of his feelings. His peculiarly poetical temperament will appreciate the beautiful imagery with which it abounds. And now, having given, in my own language, a poet's criticism, common sense and plain truth demand justice at my hands."

And she proceeded to demolish every idea that she had before advanced, and not satisfied with refuting them, showed them up with biting ridicule; and the very thoughts which she had before lauded, she made the subject of laughing mockery and merry scorn.

"I have to thank you, Miss Graham, for a practical illustration of the distance between the sublime and ridiculous," said Frederick, stepping from his intended concealment, as she paused.

"Not me, but the author of—"

"Forbear! do not longer desecrate, with idle folly, the glorious ideal of man's perfectibility."

"I must appeal from your imperiousness; Mr. Carlton and Isabella can bear witness—"

But Carlton and Isabella were not forthcoming. They had stood in silent wonder at Jessie's somerset of opinions; but Frederick's appearance explained it to their comprehension. They understood that she had detected his presence, and was only following out her determined systematic annoyance. And from the instinctive perceptions of magnetic sympathy, which makes us instantly comprehend others' feelings, a mutual glance decided them to leave the foes to settle their own differences upon the respective merits of the work in question, and they accomplished their peaceful intentions unperceived.

"Mr. Belmont," continued Jessie, proudly, as she noticed the absence of her friends, "there is an old proverb about listeners, which I would recommend to your consideration, the next time you endeavor to obtain my opinions by stealth."

"Why," returned he, bitterly, "am I the only one who is denied the frank expres-



sion of your thoughts! in what breach of courtesy have I been guilty, that to me is never vouchsafed aught but laughter, railery, and scorn?"

"Can it matter to the dignified Mr. Belmont, whether his just deserts receive their due consideration or not? I had thought him above the common weaknesses of humanity, which pine for sympathy."

"I was in an error to anticipate even the common justice of an explanation of my offence. And with the assurance, Miss Graham, that I will no longer provoke your mockery, by seeking to elucidate the cause of your dislike and hatred, I earnestly protest my entire ignorance of any act of mine, which could have warranted your conduct towards me. We met as strangers, even ignorant of each other's names; surrounded by common peril, words were interchanged. In the short intercourse which followed, after the danger had passed, I was as much charmed with the truthful and noble simplicity of your thoughts, as I had been the night before with your elevated and firm faith, and exquisite appreciation of the sublime in the terrific.

"The call to breakfast separated us; and when I returned and was approaching you, I heard myself made the subject of a merry comparison, delivered in a tone which led me to think that my conversation had been wearily tedious, and I forbore to press the acquaintance. This is the past: I returned from the United States and found my sister's youthful friend, Miss Graham, and the unknown lady who had so deeply interested me, the same person. She had informed my friends of our former meeting, and they were enlightened by her happy faculty of making everything ridiculous; of my open, and perhaps, to her, offensive admiration; and my cousin Frank prepared, by his inimitable faculty of saying anything, to exhibit my folly of presuming upon a stranger's notice in the most humiliating light. And the lady herself, not content with punishing my undisguised admiration, by exposing it to ridicule from the first moment when I could give her a name, has never faltered an instant in the exhibition of a determined spirit to humble and annoy me. I certainly have not manifested any intention of presuming upon your kindness—and should have thought the brother of your friend entitled to as much consideration as a nameless stranger. But I seek no longer to fathom your motives—and trust you will ever find friends as true as would have been the scorned Frederick Belmont."

What reply Jessie might have made if he had waited for one, is doubtful.

She was shamed and humbled. The petty maliciousness of her conduct was

returned to her own lips in a brimming bowl. But there was no opportunity for reply or explanation; for the instant he ceased speaking, he turned proudly and left the room. She stood indignantly reviewing her ungenerous conduct, when the sounds of approaching footsteps made her start. She was in no mode to meet human being; her spirit was in a storm of contending emotions; and she sprang through an open window, and was soon concealed in the luxuriant shrubbery of the grounds.

An hour afterwards Frederick's servant entered his master's room unsummoned, and remained respectfully waiting for his master to speak first.

"You may go, Andy," said Frederick, without raising his eyes from the book which he held; "I do not require anything."

"I knew you did not, sir; but there is going to be a thunderstorm; and I reckon it will come with a little sprinkling of a hurricane."

"Well, we don't have very alarming hurricanes at this season—and you have seen the wind blow before, have you not?"

"Yes, sir; but I think it will blow hard enough now to blow down some of the trees on the brow of the hill—it's going to be no common storm for the season."

"Well, I cannot still the tempest nor hold up the trees."

"But, sir—"

"What! if you have anything to say, speak and go; for I am in no mood to listen to idle predictions about the weather."

But Andy, who had been his master's constant attendant from childhood, still hesitated; for he well knew that even a hurricane would hardly excuse him in his master's estimation for prying curiosity. "Speak or go," said Frederick, still impatiently.

"Before I do speak, sir," returned Andy, fidgeting, "let me tell you that what I have heard, happened so without my seeing."

"A very lucid preface to your communication," said Frederick, smiling in scorn of himself at Andy's defence; "but proceed, and when you do speak, let me all in as few words as possible."

"Why you see, sir; when you were in the library with Miss Graham, I was one of the windows tying up a vine, and Miss Isabella had told me to do, and—"

"You listened!"

"No, sir; I didn't—I couldn't help it, the window was open. After you left the room was all still, and I thought Miss Graham was gone too; but in a moment she came flying through the window like a bird scared off of a bush; and as I caught a glimpse at her face, it was so white and queer, sad like, I didn't know what she

going to do—and I did watch her, sir; and she went right into that arbor on top of the hill, near them tall trees. And there, sir, she's lying on one of the benches, crying and taking on so, it's enough to break one's heart to see her. It's just like the harrycane, it's so dreadful and awful like—and she don't see the storm—she don't." A low, moaning sound, well understood by the inhabitants of the tropics, made Andy pause, and his master spring upon his feet.

"There it is! sir; and the poor, poor, young lady."

Frederick did not wait to hear Andy's lamentation, for although from the season he did not anticipate a tornado, yet it blew violently, and it might be dangerous for Jessie to remain in the exposed situation which Andy had pointed out; and he flew to conduct her to the house, if possible, before the rain fell. The tall trees writhed and bent beneath the fury of the elements, while the shrubbery bowed to the very ground as the wind passed over it, and it was with difficulty that he sped his way through the closely shaded walks which led to the arbor upon the brow of the hill.

When he arrived within view, he perceived that Jessie had left the arbor, but unable to stand before the wild fury of the wind, clung crouching to some low bushes, which yielded her but a faint protection from the fury of the elements. At the same moment, a tall tree which stood alone, fell with a crash, uprooted by the furious blast, upon the leafy bower which she had just left; and a heavy stunning explosion of thunder added terror to the scene. The next instant Frederick clasped the terrified girl in his arms.

"Leave me, leave me!" she exclaimed, "I cannot stand before the force of the tempest, and there is death here!"

"Fear not: the—"

"Go, go! save yourself," she interrupted passionately, from terror.

"If I cannot protect you, I—"

"Master, we both can hold Miss Graham up," interrupted Andy, who had followed his master, rather than prompted by benevolence, to save "the poor young lady" from the violence of the storm.

Both master and servant clasped the weak girl around the waist, and bore, rather than supported her towards the house. Before they had reached half way, the wind, satisfied with the exhibition of its power, lulled, and the rain descended in torrents.

"Run, run! Andy, and bring something to protect Miss Graham from being drenched," said his master, as he drew Jessie beneath the protection of some low orange trees which grew in that part of the grounds. The obedient servant obeyed the command with the fleetness of a greyhound, and Frederick at the same moment

pulled off his coat and spread it over the uncovered head of his drenched charge.

"Nay," said she, a smile of mirthfulness parting her lips at her novel head-gear, "there is no danger in a little rain falling upon my head, and you expose yourself."

"This is no time for idle ceremony," returned he, interrupting her, and gently compelling her to retain what protection his garment afforded, "it is the best I can do until Andy returns. But why did you remain upon the hill when you saw the storm approaching?"

"I did not notice," said she, blushing, "until it was upon me in its fury; but I shall not forgive myself for thus exposing you. How came you to see me?"

"I was seeking you."

"Me?"

"Yes: and if my speech when we last parted grieved or offended you, forgive it."

A flash of lightning and explosion of thunder made Jessie pause for a moment. Lightning was a phenomenon of nature, which she ever regarded with elevated enthusiasm, rather than dread.

"Mr. Belmont," said she, turning her eyes upon him, beaming with the wild delight which the scene inspired, as the thunder died away in the distance, "you have no cause to ask my forgiveness—you never have given me offence."

"Stop, Miss Graham," said he, laying his hand lightly upon her arm, "let there be perfect frankness between us in this hour—in such a scene as this we first met; then, there was sympathy and unity of feeling between us, and can it be there is none now? But that hour comes back so vivid to memory, now that I see the same expression on your countenance, I forget: but still I would that you could forgive the bitterness of my speech this morning—the words flowed from disappointment, rather than anger. I had seen your apparent interest in the volume which caused them, and did not think but that its beauties were as glorious to you as myself. But let that pass: forgive the pain I caused you—I was at that moment too much disappointed to care whether I wounded or not."

"I have nothing to forgive; if I were grieved it was by my own conduct, rather than yours. I do not," she continued, speaking fast, as if she feared the impulse would fail her, "possess Bel's sweet dignity. Anything which annoys me, vexes me; and for the last few months I have been the subject of so much plot and counterplot, that I look for steel-traps and air-guns at every corner. I distrust or suspect almost everything and every body. Uncle Howard's resolution to visit the West Indies this winter vexed me; and I

accompanied him with the resolution to be hateful to all, save Bel and dear old Mrs. Lacey. When we first met in a scene like this, my feelings were fresh, and I had confidence in all pleasant-spoken words. But a few months have passed since then; yet I have learned that a girl may not think without weighing out her thoughts by the ounce; nor speak, without counting the syllables to each word: and above all, she must not manifest any positive pleasure in a young gentleman's society, lest it be construed for an emotion stronger than pleasure. When I met you without a name," she continued, smiling, as she pushed one of the dangling arms of the coat from before her face, "I violated all these rules. I neither weighed my thoughts, counted my words, or disguised the pleasure which your conversation produced. And from memory of that, I did not wish to meet you again; at least, not at present—not until you had forgotten our former meeting: beside, when afterwards you met my friends at Saratoga, there was no inquiry for the forward girl, who, without the formula of an introduction, had—"

"And could you attribute no other reason than want of interest for that omission?" asked Frederick, interrupting her. "I thought if you still remained with the party, undoubtedly you would join them after dinner, and waiting for that, and perhaps too sensitive of my interest, I omitted it, until the summons from my friends—"

"No matter why," said she, interrupting him in turn, "it was omitted, and although you probably learned from Mr. Carlton the name of a storm-nymph truly, yet when we met on your return, I was greeted with a Grand-Lama air,—"

"The effect of astonishment. I was neither anticipating meeting Miss Graham, nor finding in her a lady whom I had lingered months abroad in hopes of discovering. After you left the United States, I was again in company with Mr. and Mrs. Butler, and upon my inquiring for the young lady with whom I had the pleasure of a slight acquaintance at our former meeting, Mrs. Butler informed me that she had been recalled home by the illness of her mother, and added, probably her next northern tour would be under the protection of a husband."

The return of Andy and three other servants bearing a chair for Jessie, and a cloak for Frederick, interrupted the interesting discourse. The storm had been forgotten, and would willingly have been endured for another half-hour, rather than have been interrupted at this moment. But I never knew an interesting *éclaircissement* about to take place but what it was interrupted by something, leaving the speakers anx-

ious for the next word, and wondering what they had said this, and omitted that. That, being important, and the this, immaterial.

But Frederick could not, except at the expense of his benevolence and sanity, command the servants back to the house, and placing Jessie in the chair, well protected from the rain, he followed the procession.

"Haste, haste, and change your dripping garments," said Mrs. Belmont to both, as they entered the hall.

"Have no fear, madam," returned Jessie, "this delightful shower will be of much service to us, as to the earth."

"Haste, haste," repeated Mrs. Belmont, motioning to be obeyed.

To finish Frederick's sentence, which the arrival of the servants had interrupted. He had inquired of Mrs. Butler for the young lady, whom he had before met under her protection, having but a very indefinite idea of but one young lady. Mrs. Butler, in her sense of propriety, could not suppose that he referred to any other than the one to whom he was formally introduced, answered with reference to Emma. And when he had asked Carlton to describe Miss Graham to him, having a suspicion she was with the party, and might be the lady of the storm, Carlton's description was totally at variance with his impression and after Mrs. Butler's answer, his conclusion was, that she had been recalled home previous to the arrival of the party at Saratoga.

But Frederick sought Jessie that evening for the ceremonious inquiry, whether she had experienced any ill effects from her exposure in the morning; and I am disposed to believe finished his own sentence. Certainly the interview was prolonged long enough to have given a meteorological lecture, or as Stanley would have said, the solution of a difficult passage in Greek.

"But," said Jessie, in reply to some remark, "would not even you have thought that I had flattered a doting old uncle, to take me to visit my former friends only as a pretext in hopes of again meeting the agreeable young gentleman who had fascinated me, if I had met you with the same frank, undisguised pleasure, which had before exhibited for your society?"

"No; I never could have imagined a thing, which implied a doubt of the integrity of your conduct, or thoughts."

"Not even if I made the glorious idleness of man's perfectibility ridiculous?"

"Have you not forgiven that?"

Dear reader, we have but little more to add, and if you are not weary, we comfort ourselves most heartily so. Lovers are the most insipid and uninteresting of animals, after they understand each other. When explanations are made, when doubts are banished, when the parties are as

As if as the indifferent are curious, and nothing remains but the formula of asking the consent of those who will not object, the interest has ceased. It is only in doubts, hopes, and fears that lovers are entertaining. And our heroine was no character for a love-heroine. She could not faint—she was too conscious of her own individuality and independence to forget herself in another; and we seriously question, whether she proved a specimen of obedience even in the conjugal state. But the last suggestion we will leave for Mr. Frederick Belmont to answer in after years. She assuredly loved him most ardently, respected him not less; but she would neither have died as the victim of disappointed love, or become the inmate of a mad-house, if she never had married him. But the elements interposed, and, in their violence opened a path for mutual explanations, and in due time, paved the way to destroy both the interest of character, and name, of Jessie Graham.

Mr. Howard laughed most heartily, when Frederick solicited him to leave Jessie under his protection, and to her vexation, robbed the matter of all romance by frankly declaring that to rid himself of her, had been his business in the West Indies.

"You were so engaged," said the old man, "with each other, the morning after the memorable storm on the Chesapeake, that you did not see an old man, who watched you both as closely as if his happiness depended upon reading your thoughts—and when afterwards nothing matrimonial met with Jessie's approbation, I was not at a loss to understand the let and hindrance. Don't look so confoundedly happy, my young sir; she would have run from you, and scoured all Europe, before she would have run into your arms. You are wholly indebted to me. I had no scruples in giving you a chance to win her, if you could, but I had about given up in despair. But it's of no use in trying to understand a woman. But take her if she says yes; and if she is as earnest to make you happy, as she has been to torment you, you will be a happy man, indeed. And, look here: tell your father (for it is a matter upon which you can have no interest), that my niece's fortune is the same which he gives his daughter, be it what it may."

Whether the fortune had any influence, or not, we cannot say; but Mr. Belmont made no objection to the proposed union, and it was arranged that the two weddings should be solemnized at the same

as delighted at the consummation he had devoutly hoped for, but her sets were incomprehensible and dignified character; and with a truly womanly questioned Jessie as to

how she and Fred at last arrived at an understanding.

"I don't know," said the lively girl, blushing; "the wooing (if wooing it was) commenced in a thunderstorm, and ended in a hurricane; it must have been the effect of electricity."

When the preliminaries of the important ceremony began to be discussed, the ladies were at a loss for bridesmaids; but Stanley disposed of the matter by asserting, that if they were an indispensable adjunct to the ceremony, himself and Mr. Howard could supply the deficiency.

Frankly confessing our horror of weddings and the description of them, we must be excused from giving the detail of a double one, and leave it for the reader's imagination; only promising, that under Mrs. Belmont's superintendence, it could not have been deficient in tasteful elegance and refined splendor.

We believe it was finally arranged that Carlton and his lovely bride should spend each winter in her paternal home, while the summers were to be divided between Mr. Burton and his professional duties.

And for the present, Jessie is still absent on her European tour, which was only delayed by her marriage—a delay which gained the addition of a most agreeable companion in the person of an affectionate husband.

Mr. Howard accompanies them.

Mr. Dwight is immersed in philosophical pursuits; but very recent information whispers, that a very quiet young lady, who regards him as a Solon, has promised to devote her life to the care of his buttons and stockings—all that a philosopher could ever want of a wife.

Mr. Cabell, now Lieutenant Cabell in the United States army, has been sent to protect the distant frontiers of our glorious republic from a "weak and divided foe," where, if he has not exchanged the sighs of "hopeless love," for the "glory of war," it is in a fair way of being forgotten amid the vexations and inflections of flies and muskitoes; though recent letters from that quarter (so very recent, the information almost comes as postscript) contain certain mysterious allusions to a dark-eyed daughter of the conquerors of the Montezumas, which lead us to hope if Lieutenant Cabell does not win from his southwestern sojourn the laurel of glory, that it may gain him a chaplet of roses and myrtle.

Of Mr. Ware's and his amiable lady's present "whereabouts," we frankly confess our ignorance.

Mr. Burton and Mr. Butler remain in statu quo. Although Mr. Burton has frankly confessed that he is happy, most happy, in the failure of his family arrangement; for now he has not only a Jessie

but as Isabella (the latter never has disputed or interrupted a single assertion of his father's excellence) to care for his old father. It is a question whether he would have been equally satisfied with the failure if it had caused a division of his estate; for it is one of the old man's hobbies to have it transmitted entire, and even now, he is urging Carlton to make provisions to

have it, in the third generation, become the sole property of the eldest son.

Mrs. Butler, when the news reached her of the double marriage, said she "rejoiced." Whether her feelings were for the happiness of her friends, or because they were so soon and finally settled in a proper home, was not known to both sexes, "dear"



THE END

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